CITY HILIGHTS

The Truth Speaks

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A PARTNERSHIP REACHING NEW FRONTIERS!

As Modi-Macron meet for bilateral talks, India-France elevate their relationship to a 'Special Global Strategic Partnership'

MUMBAI

India and France on Tuesday elevated their bilateral ties to 'Special Global Strategic Partnership' with Prime Minister Narendra Modi noting that the friendship between the two countries has "no boundaries" and the partnership can "reach from deep oceans to the tallest mountains".

Making joint press statement with French President Emmanuel Macron, PM Modi underscored the depth and significance of the India-France relationship.

'INDIA-FRANCE TIE IS VERY CRUCIAL'

Modi said India-France relationship is very crucial. "The strategic partnership between the two countries is one of the oldest and with the help of President Macron, we have deepened the ties and given it more energy in recent times. Based on this trust and vision, we are elevating our relation to a Special Global Strategic Partnership."

"This partnership is not just strategic. In this era of unpredictable global dynamics, this partnership will provide global stability and progress," he said.

Highlighting cooperation in the defence and aerospace sectors, the PM referred to the inauguration of the helicopter assembly line as a testament to the growing collaboration between the two nations.

FROM RAFALE TO SUBMARINES, INDIA-FRANCE EXPAND DEFENCE TIES

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron hailed growing ties between the two countries as they held bilateral talks in Mumbai on Tuesday.

The two countries elevated their ties to a "special global strategic partnership" with Modi and Macron vowing to significantly ramp up bilateral cooperation in areas of defence, trade and technology in the face of increasing geopolitical upheavals. Macron said both the countries are expanding defence cooperation from Rafale jets to submarines.

French Prez Macron: India-France ties are one of trust, openness, and ambition

"I thank you for your warm welcome on my fourth official visit to India. The bilateral relationship between India and France is truly remarkable and unique. This relationship is one of trust, openness, and ambition. We have also decided today to elevate this partnership to a Special Strategic Partnership, granting it a new status. There is no doubt about that, because we have complete faith in this relationship, and we have been doing so for the past eight years. Each year, by working on different things, we have charted many new paths. For example, whether it's the Indo-Pacific region or technology, where there's no hegemony. We firmly believe in the rule of law, and we've demonstrated this over the past few years. Whether it's IMEC, which we jointly launched and or whether we're talking about artificial intelligence or the International Solar Alliance, we've taken several initiatives together over the past eight years."

➤ Emmanuel Macron, French President

PM Modi: Goal is to strengthen people-to-people connections

"With the launch of the India-France Year of Innovation, we are transforming our strategic partnership into a Partnership of the People. Because innovation doesn't happen in isolation, but through collaboration. Therefore, our goal during the India-France Year of Innovation is to strengthen people-to-people connections. Whether it's defence, clean energy, space, or emerging technologies, we will connect our industries and innovators in every field. We will build strong networks between start-ups and MSMEs. We will facilitate exchanges between our students and researchers, and we will also establish new centres for joint innovation"

➤ Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

Modi, Macron unveil India's first H-125 helicopter assembly line in K'taka

MUMBAI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron on Tuesday virtually inaugurated the final assembly line of H-125 helicopters built jointly by Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL) and Airbus at Vemagal in Karnataka.

Modi said, "Today, the inauguration of the helicopter assembly line in India is another shining example of this deep trust. We are proud that India and France together will manufacture in India the world's only helicopter capable of flying to the heights of Mount Everest. And this will also be exported across the world. That means the India–France partnership has no boundaries. It can reach from the deep oceans to the tallest mountains."

The H125 Light Utility Helicopter Final Assembly Line at Vemagal is expected to strengthen India's indigenous aerospace manufacturing capabilities and further deepen India-France defence and industrial cooperation.

Know all about H125 helicopters

- The 'Made in India' H125 helicopter will help meet the Indian armed force's requirement for a light multi-role helicopter and develop new civil and para-public market segments.
- H125 helicopters will essentially contribute to army operations on the icy heights of the country's Himalayan frontiers.
- The Tata and Airbus plan will include a military version, the H125M, which will be offered out of this Indian factory with high levels of indigenised components and technologies.

First 'Made in India' H125 by early 2027

The delivery of the first 'Made in India' H125 is expected in early 2027. The helicopter will also be available for export in the South Asian region, according to TASL.

MACRON'S INDIA VISIT – HIGHLIGHTS

Macron pays tribute to 26/11 victims at Mumbai's Taj Mahal Hotel.

India, France will manufacture in India a helicopter capable of flying to the heights of Mount Everest: PM Modi on H-125.

We will continue to work in fighting terrorism: French President Macron after talks with PM Modi.

WHEN TITANS MEET

US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor paid a courtesy call on Chief Minister Siddaramaiah at his official residence, Cauvery, in Bengaluru on Tuesday. In an X post, the CMO stated, "They held a cordial interaction and exchanged views on matters of mutual interest. Karnataka values its engagement with global partners and remains committed to strengthening international cooperation." ➤ CH PHOTO

'Decision taken, CM will reveal it himself: DKS on power tussle

BENGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah himself will reveal the decision taken on the leadership issue, his deputy D K Shivakumar said on Tuesday.

"A decision has been taken by the CM, the high command and me. When the time comes, there will be clarity. The CM himself will inform the people of the state," Shivakumar said.

Shivakumar, who is also the Karnataka Congress president, was reacting to Social Welfare Minister H C Mahadevappa's statement.

On Monday, the minister said that none can force the Congress high command to intervene in the dispute over leadership between Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar. "Will the tail wag the dog?" Mahadevappa said.

GBA TO AUCTION PROPERTIES WITH TAX DUES ON FEB 22

BENGALURU: The Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) is taking strict action against property owners who have defaulted on their property taxes. Despite receiving multiple notices, many property owners have failed to pay the taxes, prompting the GBA to auction such assets. It has identified properties that are in arrears and will be auctioned to recover the outstanding tax amount. The Bengaluru South City Corporation has fixed dates for the auction. The Jayanagar zone of the South City Corporation will auction 98 properties on February 22, with the corporation owed Rs 1.55 crore in taxes. The auction will include residential, commercial, and vacant properties.

Tarique Rahman sworn in as Bangladesh PM

DHAKA

Ushering in a new era in Bangladesh politics, dominated for decades by Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia, Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) chief Tarique Rahman on Tuesday took oath as the prime minister of the country.

Rahman's rise to power comes after his party secured a landslide win in the 12 February polls - the first nationwide election since a mass uprising in 2024 led to the ouster of long-time leader Sheikh Hasina and ushered in the Md Yunus-led interim government.

Rahman's BNP secured a commanding two-thirds majority in the 300-seat parliament, winning 209 seats (total 212 with its allies) of the 299 seats in the 13th parliamentary elections, returning to power after nearly two decades. The Islamist party, Jamaat-e-Islami, contesting its first election since a 2013 ban was lifted following Hasina's ouster, won a record 68 seats on its own and 77 seats with its 11 allies. Deposed premier Sheikh Hasina's Awami League was barred from contesting polls after its registration was revoked by the Election Commission.

Rahman becomes the first male to hold the top post in the country of 170 million people in 35 years.

Jamaat and its allies — including the National Citizen Party, led by youth activists who played a prominent role in the movement that toppled Hasina — will form the opposition.

President Mohammed Shahabuddin officiated as Rahman and his cabinet took their oaths in the presence of senior political figures, diplomats, civil and military officials, and representatives from invited countries, including China, India and Pakistan. Lok Sabha speaker Om Birla, who landed in Dhaka earlier on Tuesday, represented India.

Rahman's BNP bagged **209** out of **297** seats, while right-wing Jamaat-e-Islami secured **68** seats in the 13th parliamentary elections. Deposed premier Sheikh Hasina's Awami League was barred from contesting polls.

Breaking with tradition, the swearing-in ceremony was held under the open sky at the South Plaza of the Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban, the national parliament building, instead of the Bangabhaban, the president's official residence where such events are usually organised.

Rahman's elevation caps a long and turbulent political journey. He returned to Bangladesh last year after 17 years of self-imposed exile in London, arriving shortly before his mother's death.

In his first remarks after the election, Rahman urged calm and restraint, saying: "Peace, law and order must be maintained at any cost." He called on supporters to avoid retaliation, warning: "We will not tolerate any kind of chaos."

Modi congratulates Tarique, invites him to visit India

New Delhi: Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla met Tarique Rahman on Tuesday and handed over a warm letter by Prime Minister Narendra Modi inviting Bangladesh's newly-sworn-in prime minister to India. Additionally, Birla also spoke to Rahman over the phone and conveyed PM Modi's congratulations. The letter from PM Modi read, "I extend my warmest congratulations to you on the victory of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party at the just-concluded parliamentary elections in Bangladesh and on your appointment as the next Prime Minister of Bangladesh." PM Modi's letter also extended an invitation to Rahman, his wife Dr Zubaida and his daughter Zaima to visit India at a "mutually convenient time". "A warm welcome awaits you in India," he added in the congratulatory letter.

Kapil, Gavaskar bat for jailed Imran Khan

ISLAMABAD

More than a dozen former international cricket captains, including India's Sunil Gavaskar and Kapil Dev, rallied Tuesday for jailed Pakistan ex-premier Imran Khan, appealing the Islamabad government to give him "adequate" medical treatment. The statement, signed by 14 captains and seen by AFP, demands the proper care of Khan, a former World Cup-winning captain who according to his lawyer has lost most of the vision in his right eye.

Khan has been in jail since 2023 and was sentenced late last year along with his wife to 17 years on corruption charges they both deny. His lawyer visited Khan in jail last week and later submitted a report to Pakistan's chief justice and the SC detailing his concerns and requesting treatment for his client.

SKILL IS THE TOOL

Don't fear AI, prepare for it: Modi reassures India's youth

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday sought to allay concerns over the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) on employment, asserting that the government is proactively investing in large-scale skilling and re-skilling initiatives to prepare Indians for an AI-driven future.

Addressing apprehensions that rapid advances in AI could displace jobs, the PM said fear often stems from a lack of preparedness. He stressed that the government's focus is on equipping the workforce, particularly the youth, with the skills required to adapt to emerging technologies rather than resisting change. According to him, technology-led transitions have historically created new opportunities, provided societies invest early in human capital.

The remarks came against the backdrop of the ongoing AI Summit in New Delhi, where global leaders, industry experts and policymakers have been discussing the opportunities and challenges posed by artificial intelligence. The summit has become a focal point for debates on regulation, innovation and the future of work in the age of AI, bringing together voices from government, business and academia to shape a shared vision for the technology's development.

'INDIA SHOULD BE AMONG 3 AI SUPERPOWERS'

The Prime Minister said India should be among top 3 Artificial Intelligence (AI) superpowers globally as he unveiled his vision for India in 2047. He further said as the first global AI summit is hosted in the Global South, India is creating a platform that amplifies under-represented voices and development priorities. Reflecting his thoughts on fundamental principle to achieve self-reliance, Modi said that India must not just consume technology but create one.

Preparation is the best antidote to fear. That is why we have been investing in skilling and re-skilling our people for an AI-driven future," he said, adding that the government is committed to strengthening every effort by the talented youth to make AI a force multiplier for innovation and inclusion.

QUICK READ

Mangalore Electricity Supply Company Limited to Hold Public Hearing

Chikkamagaluru

A public hearing has been scheduled to gather consumer feedback in connection with the annual performance review petition filed by the power utility before the Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission. The hearing will be held on February 18 at 11 am at the MESCOM corporate office hall in Bijai. Consumers and other stakeholders have been invited to attend and share their views, according to an official release.

Ragi Procurement Centres in Kadur Taluk to be Inaugurated

Chikkamagaluru

Ragi procurement centres opened under the 2025–26 Minimum Support Price scheme in Kadur taluk will be formally inaugurated on February 18 at 11.30 am at the APMC premises. Centres have been established at Kadur-1, Kadur-2, Birur and Panchanahalli-1 and 2 to facilitate farmers in selling their produce. The district manager of the Karnataka Food and Civil Supplies Corporation said farmers are encouraged to make use of the facilities.

Health Check-up Camp Organised for Hamali Workers

Chikkamagaluru

A comprehensive health screening camp for hamali workers will be held on February 24 from 9.30 am at the APMC yard. The programme is being organised by the district department for empowerment of persons with disabilities and senior citizens in association with Jeevita Foundation, Society for People's Integrated Development and Narayana Hrudayalaya, Shivamogga. The camp will include diabetes testing, ECG-based cardiac screening and physiotherapy services. Workers may contact organisers at 9741898804 or 9964238819 for details.

Two-Day Tribal Sports, Cultural Meet at Netaji Playground

Chikkamagaluru

A two-day sports and cultural meet for particularly vulnerable tribal communities — including Malekudiya Hasalaru, Gaudaluravaru, Hakkipikki and Dongri Gerasia groups — will be organised on February 21 and 22 at the Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose playground. The event is being conducted by the Department of Youth Empowerment and Sports. Deputy director Dr H.P. Manjula said the meet aims to encourage participation, cultural expression and community engagement.

College Student Drowns in Tunga River While Swimming with Friends

Shivamogga

A 19-year-old student drowned in the Tunga River on Monday after going swimming with friends. The deceased, Tejasvi, had gone to swim in the river near Kushavati in the town along with his friends. He was the son of Mahesh from Heddur and was pursuing his BCom degree at Balabailu Degree College in Thirthahalli. Police personnel and fire brigade staff reached the spot and conducted operations, after which diving expert Promod Poojari recovered the body from the water.

Stone-Pelting Allegations on Hindu Homes Spark Communal Tension

CHIKKAMAGALURU

Serious allegations have emerged that youth belonging to another community carried out stone-pelting on Hindu houses in the city's Vijayapura layout. The incident caused the entire town to remain literally like embers covered in ash throughout the midnight hours.

Over the past one week a group of troublemakers has been throwing stones at houses, and for the last three days they have been involved in acts of teasing girls, which became the main cause of public outrage.

Hindu organisation activists caught two youths who were moving in a suspicious manner in connection with these incidents, thrashed them and handed them over to the police. Immediately following this action, hundreds of youths from both communities assembled in front of Basavanhalli police station and the government hospital, resulting in a severely tense atmosphere.

One side argued that they were not the ones who pelted stones, while the other group insisted that action must also be taken against those who carried out the assaults. Police became alert before the situation went out of hand, dispersed the gathered crowd and struggled to bring the situation under control.

At present the youths who were injured in the assaults are receiving treatment at the district hospital, and tight police bandobast continues in the city.

Kodagu to Host II PUC Exams at 18 Centres from Feb 28 to March 17

Total 5,255 students to appear; DC S.J. Somashekar directs smooth, confusion-free conduct during preparatory meeting at his office in Madikeri.

MADIKERI

The Second PUC annual examinations in Kodagu district will be held across 18 centres from February 28 to March 17, with a total of 5,255 students set to write the exams.

District Deputy Commissioner S.J. Somashekar has instructed all concerned officials to take necessary steps to ensure the examinations are conducted in a systematic manner.

Presiding over the preliminary meeting on preparations for the Second PUC annual examinations held in the conference hall of the Deputy Commissioner's office in the city on Monday, the DC spoke on the arrangements.

He directed that the Second PUC annual examinations must be conducted smoothly and in a well-organised way without any kind of confusion or irregularities.

Two Separate Road Accidents Near Agumbe Bus Stand

SHIVAMOGGA

Two separate road accidents occurred near Agumbe bus stand in the taluk on Tuesday, leaving the riders of the involved motorcycles injured.

In the first incident, two bikes collided head-on in front of the Bank of Baroda branch adjacent to the bus stand. One of the riders sustained a severe blow to the ribs and was immediately shifted to hospital for treatment. Barely a few moments later, another collision took place in front of the nearby church, this time between a car and a bike. The bike rider suffered injuries and was rushed to hospital with the help of local residents.

Residents point out that the road at Agumbe bus stand is excessively wide, allowing vehicles from various directions to converge suddenly and create confusion, which has led to repeated accidents in the area.

They suggest that extending the divider or barricades for some distance would help regulate vehicle speed and movement. According to public opinion, this measure could prevent potentially serious mishaps in the days ahead.

Diesel tank damaged in rollover causes widespread fuel leak and slippery road; 112 police personnel spread soil and water to restore safe passage; video of timely response goes viral on social media.

Truck Overturns; Diesel Spill Disrupts Traffic

SIDDAPUR

A truck loaded with jelly stones overturned on Tuesday morning under Siddapur police station limits. The impact of the fall damaged the vehicle's diesel tank, resulting in heavy diesel leakage that spread along the road and caused traffic disruption.

Police personnel from the 112 emergency response team arrived promptly at the scene and acted with quick thinking to facilitate smooth traffic movement. Videos showing

the staff's timely efforts have gone viral on social media.

The overturned lorry suffered damage to its diesel tank, leading to large-scale fuel spillage. Oil spread extensively across the road, creating a slippery surface that posed risks and hindered safe vehicle movement.

To enable secure and continuous traffic flow, 112 personnel Arun Rawal and Vinayak L, collaborated with the drivers to sprinkle soil and water on the road. This measure effectively countered the slipperiness caused by the oil spill, allowing vehicles to proceed without hindrance.

'Police at Every Door' Outreach Held for Paper Mill Workers

DANDELI

Under SP Deepan M.N.'s guidance, DYSP Shivanand Madar Khandi-led session at West Coast Paper Mills complex informs workers on law, safety, crime prevention, traffic rules and cyber frauds; CPI highlights witness reluctance leading to low conviction rates; focus on women and vulnerable groups' protection; large worker turnout fosters police-public trust.

As part of the ongoing 'Police at Every Door' awareness initiative guided by Uttara Kannada District Superintendent of Police Deepan M.N., a public interaction meeting was organised for workers of the paper mill. The session took place under the leadership of Dandeli DYSP Shivanand Madar Khandi, CPI Shivanand Ambiger and City PSI Amin Attar.

Held in the open area of the shopping complex within the premises of West Coast Paper Mills, the meeting provided workers with information on legal awareness, safety measures, crime prevention, traffic regulations and cyber frauds.

The primary objective was to build trust and confidence between the police department and the public.

Speaking at the event, PSI Amin Attar said, "Under the special 'Police at Every Door' programme, police are visiting every household to gather information and instil self-confidence among people." Through such public interaction meetings in the town, awareness is being created on traffic rules, safe driving, prevention of cyber crimes, worker safety, prompt response to complaints, investigation updates and similar matters.

CPI Shivanand Ambiger expressed concern that "the main reason for low conviction rates in criminal cases is the lack of evidence. Witnesses retracting statements in court allow offenders to escape punishment." To address this, the Central Government has introduced legal amendments including digital documentation and recording of evidence to ensure offenders receive certain punishment, he informed.

He added that providing legal protection to women and exploited sections remains a key priority for the police department.

A large number of paper mill workers participated in the meeting and engaged in dialogue with police officers regarding their concerns, security and legal issues. The programme was appreciated by the public for significantly strengthening police-public relations.

Night Flight Operations Planned at Shivamogga Airport Soon: KSIIDC Chairman

SHIVAMOGGA

Night flight operations at Shivamogga airport are expected to commence within the next six to seven months, with all required infrastructure measures being taken, Karnataka State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation (KSIIDC) Chairman Nanjayyanamath said on Monday.

Addressing reporters on the outskirts of the city, he said civil works worth about ₹6 crore are scheduled to begin by the end of February to enable aircraft take-off and landing during night hours.

He said administrative hurdles related to the renewal of the airport's licence — pending due to earlier delays — have been resolved. A fine of ₹22 lakh has been paid, and the licence has been renewed, eliminating the need for renewal for the next three years.

To prevent aircraft from being forced to return without landing due to adverse weather and other operational challenges, a Directional Beacon Omni Range (DBOR) navigation system required for night operations and cargo handling has completed the tender process. Power connectivity for the system has also been finalised, he added.

Soil testing required under regulatory norms for installing night-landing systems has been sent for analysis, and the report is expected within a week. Nanjayyanamath said he would personally review the progress of all works to ensure timely completion.

Passenger traffic between Shivamogga and cities such as Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, and Goa has been steadily rising, he noted. With the Centre-sponsored subsidised air travel scheme UDAN scheme nearing expiry, efforts will be made — with support from local MPs and public representatives — to appeal to the Union Civil Aviation Ministry for its continuation to prevent fare escalation for passengers.

He also said discussions have been held at the corporation level to develop a large commercial complex and a five-star hotel under a public-private partnership model on 17 acres already reserved within the airport premises. A decision is expected soon.

Applications earlier invited from private firms to establish a pilot training centre at the airport did not receive a response. Fresh applications will be invited.

Nanjayyanamath further said that 370 farmer families who had given land for airport construction are yet to receive promised residential plots. Despite repeated appeals and a court ruling in their favour, the issue remains unresolved. He said he would bring the matter to the attention of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and press for the release of funds to settle the issue.

Airport officials, including chief administrator Shamanth and others, were present.

Madikeri MLA Holds Grievance Redressal Session for Constituents

MADIKERI

Dr.Mantar Gowda, MLA for Madikeri constituency and member of the Indian National Congress, conducted a public grievance hearing at an office located in the Madikeri Zilla Panchayat building.

The physician-turned-legislator stated that he personally listened to complaints and requests brought by residents from various parts of the constituency. He assured that necessary steps would be taken to provide appropriate solutions and redressal for the issues raised. The session forms part of ongoing public service efforts in the region.

Woman Returns Gold-Filled Purse to Owner

KARKALA

Vidya Shetty, a resident of Mumbai's Sakinaka area and originally from Ambettu in Kantavara, has demonstrated exemplary honesty by tracing and safely returning a purse containing gold ornaments that she found on a train to its rightful owner. On February 13, while travelling in the AC coach of the Matsyagandha Express, Vidya Shetty came across a purse filled with gold jewellery. Acting promptly, she located the owner and handed over the item securely. The purse belonged to Chandrakala. The incident serves as a reminder that during festive occasions, celebrations and holiday travel by train or bus, members of the public should remain vigilant regarding their valuable belongings.

Police to Act Under Law in Chikkamagaluru Incident, Says Home Minister

CHIKKAMAGALURU

Police action is underway in connection with the stone-pelting incident reported in Chikkamagaluru, Karnataka Home Minister G. Parameshwara said while speaking in Mangaluru.

He stated that the complainant belongs to a Scheduled Caste community and police would apply relevant legal sections after assessment. The minister emphasised adherence to procedure and said law enforcement agencies are handling the matter.

Responding to other queries, Parameshwara said legislators travelling abroad do so in their personal capacity. Budget preparation, he explained, is a structured process led by the government.

He described recent political remarks by colleagues as personal viewpoints and part of normal democratic exchange. On infrastructure, he highlighted ongoing work to relocate the district prison near Mudipu, adding that additional funds are needed to complete security structures.

Officials expect the shift to reduce disturbances and improve management within the correctional system.

Shivaram Hebbar Re-elected Uttara Kannada DCC Bank President

SIRSI

Shivaram Hebbar, the MLA, has been re-elected unopposed as president of the prestigious Uttara Kannada District Central Cooperative Bank (KDCC) for a second consecutive term. Krishna Desai from Joida was unanimously elected vice-president. The elections were held on Monday at the bank's head office. With only Hebbar and Desai filing nominations, Assistant Commissioner Chandrashekhar G.R., acting as returning officer, officially declared both elected unopposed for the upcoming term.

Short Circuit Triggers Fire at Shop

KUNDAPURA

A short circuit caused a fire that completely destroyed the Ashlesh Online Service Centre, which had been operating for the past one year in the premises of Kannukere Sri Navashakti Kalyana Mantapa along National Highway 66 in Tekkatte.

The incident occurred on Monday around 9.15 pm. As usual, the shop owner had locked the premises and returned home when the short circuit sparked the blaze. All items inside the shop—including computers, printers, stationery materials, inverter battery, chairs, tables and other equipment—were reduced to ashes. The total loss is estimated to exceed ₹6 lakh.

The moment the fire broke out, local youths rushed to help extinguish the flames. Fire brigade personnel from Kundapura arrived at the scene and successfully brought the fire under control.

Chidambara Baikampady Chosen to Preside Over 28th Dakshina Kannada Kannada Sahitya Sammelana

Esteemed poet and veteran journalist Chidambara Baikampady will head the forthcoming district literary convention in Bantwal later this month; his decades-long contributions to Kannada writing and media receive high recognition.

MANGALURU

Veteran writer and seasoned journalist Chidambara Baikampady stands selected as president for the 28th edition of the Dakshina Kannada District Kannada Sahitya Sammelana. The sammelana takes place on March 27 and 28 at Sparsha Kala Mandira located on B.C. Road in Bantwal.

Members of the district executive committee arrived at this choice during their recent meeting, as confirmed in an official statement released by Dr. M.P. Srinath, who heads the Dakshina Kannada District unit of the Kannada Sahitya Parishat.

Known for his long career in both literature and journalism, Chidambara Baikampady held important positions over many years at Mungaru and Kannada Prabha newspapers. Kannada literary circles regard him as a noteworthy poet; among his published poetry collections

are Begudi, Vastavada Lekkachara, and Kappu Huduga. He also brought out an audio cassette titled Tulu Premageethegalu. His public service includes membership in the Mangalore University Senate and in the Karnataka Tulu Sahitya Academy.

The book titled Idu Mungaru examines aspects of the journalism profession. During a full decade at Mungaru newspaper he collaborated closely with senior journalist Vaddarse, actively supporting and realizing the publication's core vision. His journalism journey further includes two years with Amrita weekly paper, three years at Divyavani weekly, ten years serving as chief reporter for the Mungaru daily, fifteen years as principal reporter at Kannada Prabha daily, and a stint as editor-in-chief of the publication Bimbadwani.

Through incisive, contemplative reporting and articles filled with social concern he has substantially strengthened and diversified the world of Kannada journalism.

His authored works encompass books about the field of journalism—one dedicated to the legacy of Mungaru and another titled P. Go Prapancha—besides writings that delve into political intricacies and several other literary titles.

Honors received by Baikampady include the Dakshina Kannada District Rajyotsava Award. The Karnataka Union of Journalists conferred on him the award for best investigative journalist. All India Radio presented its annual prize to his radio documentary-drama Bengare.

Other accolades comprise the Bannanje Ramacharya Journalism Award, the Inland Award within journalism, the Karnataka Media Academy Award, the Dr. Kota Shivarama Karanth Award, and—in 2025—the highly regarded Vaddarse Raghurama Shetty Journalism Award.

Mittabagilu Farmer B.K. Devaraya Selected for Inaugural Raithapeetha Award

MANGALURU

Farmer B.K. Devaraya from Mittabagilu in Belthangady taluk of Dakshina Kannada has been chosen as the recipient of the newly instituted Raithapeetha Award.

Dr. Ramakrishna Achar, head of SKF Elixer institution and a prominent entrepreneur from Dakshina Kannada, established this innovative ₹1 lakh annual award with the aim of honouring the country's farmers and providing encouragement to agricultural work. The prize seeks to recognise and celebrate farmers each year.

Over 200 rare paddy varieties have been preserved and passed on to future generations by Devaraya, making him the first awardee. Despite paddy cultivation declining in many parts of Dakshina Kannada, the 80-year-old farmer has consistently maintained and grown more than 200 rare rice strains.

Dr. Ramakrishna Achar stated that the award recognises not only Devaraya's efforts in safeguarding varieties that might have vanished under the pressures of time but also his exemplary life and role as an inspiration to others in farming.

Devaraya

Dr. Achar

80-year-old rice variety conservator from Belthangady honoured with ₹1 lakh prize by Dr. Ramakrishna Achar of SKF Elixir; award ceremony set for February 20 at Go-Dhama farm in Muniyal.

As chairman of SKF Elixer near Moodbidri, Dr. Ramakrishna Achar has already made significant contributions as an entrepreneur and now turns his focus toward motivating agriculture and farmers—an approach widely seen as exemplary. His stance holds great importance in attracting the younger generation to farming, protecting soil health, and ensuring agriculture survives and thrives for future generations.

The Raithapeetha Award presentation will occur on February 20 at the Go-Dhama garden in Muniyal, Karkala taluk, Udupi district, situated at the foothills of the Western Ghats. The announcement notes that Adrishya Kadasiddeshwara Swamiji from Siddagiri Math in Kolhapur, Maharashtra, and Nijalingeshwara Swamiji from Nidasosi Duradundeshwara Siddhasansthan Math in Belagavi will grace the occasion. On the same day, an agriculture awareness circle programme and the Ekapavitra Shrimannagama Mandala event will also take place at Go-Dhama to promote farming consciousness.

Explaining his intent, Dr. Ramakrishna Achar said farmers deserve the same—or even greater—respect and dignity as software engineers, doctors, or businesspeople in our country. Society must create an environment where farmers live with honour.

Having interacted with farmers across several states, he observed that soil fertility is gradually declining. For future generations to inherit fertile land, agriculture must persist and expand. This award forms part of his broader efforts in that direction. Beyond it, he has created a model farm called Go-Dhama to introduce agriculture to the next generation's children, with many more plans in the pipeline.

Bhoomi Pooja Held for New Health and Welfare Centre

MANGALURU

A groundbreaking ceremony was performed on Tuesday for the construction of a new Health and Welfare Centre in Kandavara village.

The event was jointly conducted by BJP MLA Dr. Bharath Shetty Y and MP Captain Brijesh Chowta. The centre is being built with a grant of 65 lakh rupees from the Central Government.

The ceremony was attended by former Panchayat President Shalini S., Vice President Uday R. Rao, Panchayat Development Officer Soumya, Secretary Jalajakshi, former Panchayat members, concerned officials, health centre nurses, and local villagers.

Namma Saras Mela to Blend Livelihoods, Culture and Cuisine in Nine-Day Showcase

MANGALURU

A nine-day women-led trade and cultural fair is set to energise Mangaluru as Namma Saras Mela–2026 opens later this month, highlighting the strength of India's self-help group movement.

The exhibition-cum-sale will host participants from multiple states, offering visitors a curated display of handmade toys, handloom sarees, khadi fabrics, millet products, spices, herbal preparations and decorative household items. Spread across more than 120 stalls, the mela is positioned as a direct marketing platform where producers engage face-to-face with buyers.

At its core, the event celebrates the SHG ecosystem that has empowered women through skill-building, collective finance and enterprise development. Training in value addition, packaging and branding has helped many groups transition into sustainable micro-businesses, improving household incomes and social standing.

Food lovers can look forward to a lively festival zone featuring 30 live kitchens serving regional favourites. The Akka Café showcase will demonstrate how SHG-run eateries create employment while promoting local cuisine.

Daily workshops will focus on entrepreneurship skills, encouraging participants to scale their ventures. Evenings will feature cultural performances, reinforcing the mela's community character and drawing families to the venue.

Organisers say the fair is about more than commerce — it is a platform for social change. SHGs often serve as hubs for awareness campaigns on health, nutrition and gender equality, strengthening women's voices in local governance and community decision-making.

The mela will be inaugurated by Chief Minister of Karnataka, Siddaramaiah on February 20.

With free entry and long visiting hours, the mela aims to attract a broad audience, turning shopping into a meaningful act of supporting women's economic independence and regional craftsmanship.

Housing Boost for Police as Coastal Security Outlook Improves

MANGALURU

Police personnel in Mangaluru received a major welfare boost with the inauguration and foundation laying of new quarters on Tuesday, an initiative Karnataka Home Minister G. Parameshwara described as vital for community well-being.

"I undertook a tour of Dakshina Kannada district and performed the inauguration of 12 newly constructed police residential quarters for the officers and staff of Dakshina Kannada District Police and Mangalore City Police, along with laying the foundation stone for the construction of 54 residential quarters. During this time, I visited the

residential quarters where police staff were residing and personally assessed the issues faced by the staff, including basic facilities," he stated.

Addressing officers, the minister said caring for the police force ensures smoother law enforcement and public confidence. He praised intensified anti-drug efforts that have led to a reduction in drug-related offences, particularly around educational institutions.

Parameshwara said crime patterns in the coastal district have stabilised, with a decline in serious violent incidents. The improved law-and-order environment is helping attract development discussions in tourism, IT and advanced manufacturing sectors.

Senior police officials attended the ceremony, highlighting cooperation between the government and the department in strengthening infrastructure and morale.

Officials said the housing initiative will enhance working conditions while reinforcing the administration's commitment to public safety.

Trust Pitches Coordinated Task Force, Pilot Waste Plan for Growing City

MANGALURU

With urban pressures mounting in Mangaluru, a local civic organisation has urged authorities to adopt a long-term, coordinated strategy to tackle the twin challenges of waste management and traffic congestion, describing them as critical issues for the city's future livability.

In a formal representation to district authorities and civic agencies, Sri Ambamaheshwari Seva Trust has proposed the formation of a dedicated inter-departmental task force bringing together officials from the district administration, municipal corporation, traffic police, railways and other stakeholders. The trust says rapid city expansion, population growth and rising vehicle numbers are straining existing systems, making piecemeal solutions ineffective.

According to the trust, a structured task force could ensure integrated planning, efficient implementation and continuous monitoring, while also creating a platform for public participation. Such coordination, it argues, is essential to deliver durable civic solutions rather than temporary relief measures.

The organisation, active in cleanliness campaigns, environmental awareness and civic engagement for nearly a decade, has also rolled out a citizen-driven initiative called "Awake Kudla". The programme — inaugurated in April 2025 by former district commissioner Mullai Muhilan — enables residents to report waste and traffic issues through a mobile app. Complaints are addressed through a five-step framework focused on study, awareness, monitoring, coordination and follow-up, with community participation at its core.

As part of its on-ground efforts, the trust plans to launch a pilot "1,000-household waste collection and segregation project" in Ambanagar, Mulihithlu area of Hoige Bazaar ward, in collaboration with the Mangaluru City Corporation. The initiative aims to separate dry waste at the ward level before it reaches central dumping facilities, promoting decentralised processing and reducing landfill stress.

The trust maintains that sustained cooperation between civic bodies and residents is the only viable path toward building a cleaner, safer and more sustainable city, and has appealed to authorities and elected representatives for proactive support.

Counter Complaint Filed in Bar Assault Case Involving Knife and Wooden Stick Attack

SULLIA

Sullia police station has recorded a counter complaint in response to the original FIR claiming assault and intimidation by one Praveen. Madhav (35), a resident of Jalloor, submitted this counter complaint.

On February 15 Madhav had visited a bar in Sullia to meet his friend Bharat and was engaged in conversation with him. Outside the bar an acquaintance named Praveen struck Madhav on the back with a piece of wooden stick.

At that moment Venkappa, the son of Madhav's elder paternal uncle, firmly caught hold of Praveen. Praveen then used the knife he was carrying to slash Venkappa on the heel, the right hand and the left thumb. During the ensuing scuffle Venkappa sustained a bleeding injury on his left knee.

The entire clash arose from differing opinions between Madhav and Praveen, which led to an argument between Praveen and Venkappa. Out of this grudge Praveen carried out the attack using the wooden stick and the knife.

While leaving the spot Praveen turned towards Madhav and issued the threat that he would not spare Madhav's life. Madhav has been admitted to Sullia government hospital for treatment. The police station in Sullia has formally registered the case.

BJP Leaders File Complaint Against MLA Over Remarks on MLC Chalavadi Narayana Swamy

PUTTUR

BJP party and its various committees have strongly condemned Puttur MLA Ashok Kumar Rai after he issued a statement perceived as insulting Dalit leaders in reply to Legislative Council Opposition Leader Chalavadi Narayana Swamy's criticism on development-related matters in Uppinangady.

Under the leadership of LohitAmminadka, president of BJP Puttur Rural Mandal SC Morcha, BJP functionaries submitted a written complaint at Puttur City Police Station seeking legal proceedings against the legislator for defaming Chalavadi Narayana Swamy and the entire Chalavadi Scheduled Caste community, besides publicly speaking in a manner that fosters hatred between communities.

SC Morcha and senior BJP functionaries demand legal action over alleged insult to Scheduled Caste leader and community near Mahalingeshwara Temple; former MLA and district vice-president slam Rai's conduct as culture reflecting and unrest-creating.

Chalavadi T. Narayana Swamy, who holds the position of Member of Legislative Council and Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Council, occupies a high constitutional post in the state. He belongs to the Scheduled Caste and serves as a prominent leader of the backward Chalavadi community.

Near the Puttur Sri Mahalingeshwara Temple, MLA Ashok Kumar Rai gave a public video byte in which he used extremely derogatory words against this senior Dalit leader. The complaint alleges that Rai, driven by a sense of inferiority toward the Scheduled Caste community, deliberately referred to the community name while publicly humiliating both the community and its leader Chalavadi Narayana Swamy.

"Such public utterances of low-level remarks against Scheduled Caste people by a sitting legislator are likely to encourage ordinary citizens to speak disparagingly about the community and have already created conditions for hatred to grow between social groups," the complaint said.

The complainants have therefore requested the police to investigate MLA Ashok Kumar Rai and initiate appropriate legal action for publicly insulting the Legislative Council Opposition Leader, showing contempt toward the Scheduled Caste community, and making statements that promote societal hatred.

QUICK READ

E-attendance must for students from 2026-27

Bengaluru

The department of school education and literacy has re-issued an order making e-attendance mandatory for students in govt and aided primary schools, high schools, and pre-university colleges starting from the 2026–27 academic year. In the previous budget, the govt announced the 'Niranthara' programme to record e-attendance through facial recognition of children and Rs 5 crore was allocated for the installation of artificial intelligence-based mobile and other equipment. However, it was not implemented in 2025–26. Therefore, the previous order was withdrawn, and instructions were issued to implement it from 2026–27 through the e-governance centre of the department of personnel and administrative reforms at a cost of Rs 2.2 crore. Meanwhile, the department issued another order making attendance confirmation through a mobile application, Karnataka Attendance Management System (KAMS), mandatory for all teaching and non-teaching staff of government schools and colleges.

Additional stop for 4 trains at Nayandahalli station

Bengaluru

From Tuesday, four major express trains will make an additional stop at Nayandahalli railway station. The Railway Department has approved additional halting at Nayandahalli Railway Station for the Mysore-KSR Bangalore City Chamundi Express (16215/16216), Mysore-Bagalkot Basava Express (17307/17308), Thoothukudi-Mysore Express (16235/1 6236) and Mysore-Pandharpur Gol Gumbaz Express (16535/16535). Union Minister of State for Railways and Jal Shakti V Somanna flagged off the train stop on Tuesday and will also inaugurated the KSR Bengaluru-Nayandahalli (on Vijayanagar-Mysore road) road flyover.

K'taka private bus operators blame 'Shakti' for losses

Alleging that the state government's Shakti Yojana has been causing huge losses to private bus owners, the Karnataka Transport Association appealed to CM Siddaramaiah to limit the project to district limits

BENGALURU

The Shakti Yojana is causing a lot of trouble to private bus owners, leading to a situation where many bus owners are not taking their vehicles on the road. The Karnataka Transport Association Federation has appealed to CM Siddaramaiah to restrict the scope of the Shakti Yojana to within the district limits.

The demands of various organizations were discussed in the budget preparatory meetings held at the Vidhana Soudha on Monday. During this, the Karnataka Transport Associations Federation said that the Shakti Yojana is not only affecting the situation of the owners, but also the drivers, conductors and other dependent families who depend on the buses. Since this is also causing loss to the government exchequer, it has requested that the scope of the Shakti Yojana be restricted to the district limits to facilitate the same.

It has also appealed that if the Race Course site is developed as a Pay and Use bus stop, the traffic congestion at Majestic and Anand Rao Circle will be reduced and the government will receive additional revenue.

During a meeting with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, the alliance. It has appealed to amend the aggregator rules and impose a clear and complete ban on bike taxis in the state. It has been stated that the order to formulate rules to allow two-wheelers to operate as bike taxis without formulating a separate government policy, license and safety standards is causing serious harm to the legal auto and taxi sector.

Although aggregator companies are required to pay 1.5 percent royalty to the government as per the prevailing rules, the state government has suffered a huge loss of revenue due to its non-recovery. This amount is equivalent to crores of rupees and it is requested to immediately implement strict implementation measures and protect the legitimate income of the government. Minister G Parameshwar said that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah gives what is due to our community.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah held a meeting with the Scheduled Caste MLAs of the ruling party at the Vidhana Soudha and discussed the budget for 2026-27. Scheduled Caste Ministers and MLAs, Chief Secretary to the Government Shalini Rajneesh, and officials of the Finance Department were present.

Pricey trend: Seasonal squeeze leaves fruit lovers feel the pinch

BENGALURU

Buying fruits is steadily becoming more expensive for residents, with most varieties in city markets witnessing a price rise of at least 20 percent over the past six weeks

Traders attribute the spike to seasonal fluctuations and inconsistent arrivals. The city sources much of its fruit supply from Maharashtra, Haveri, Devanahalli and other parts of Karnataka. As arrivals tighten, prices have climbed across the board. Bananas, which were priced at Rs 40, are now selling for around Rs 70 per kg. Pomegranates, which earlier retailed at Rs 100–120 per kg, have surged to Rs 160–200 per kg.

Grapes, too, have seen a sharp jump. The price of green varieties went up from Rs 100 per kg to Rs 160. Apples, priced Rs 120 earlier, are now selling for around Rs 180 per kg. Guavas, once available for Rs 100–120 per kg, are currently priced at nearly Rs 140. Black grapes cost Rs 240–280 per kg. Among relatively affordable options, watermelon and muskmelon are selling at about Rs 50 per piece, while sapota ranges between Rs 100 and Rs 140 per kg. Traders at KR Market told that the recent spike is partly due to stock accumulation by a handful of wholesalers ahead of the festive season, which has temporarily tightened supply.

For consumers, however, the explanations offer little comfort. P Anupama, a homemaker from South End Circle, said the increase is evident everywhere including on online platforms. I came to KR Market thinking prices would be lower than in other parts of the city. But even here, apples are selling at Rs 200 per kg, which is very high. Still, since fruits are healthy, I don't want my children to miss out on them in their daily diet, she said.

Experts suggest that the prices will continue to be high till the end of the month.

R Selvarajan, Director of ICAR–National Research Centre for Banana, said, farmers are increasingly looking at the Mumbai market, as it is more attractive now. Bananas are widely consumed, including by diabetics. Compared to many other states, Karnataka currently has lower supply, while demand went up as more people are seeking bananas. Supplies are likely to improve in April and May with the arrival of the new harvest.

Woman secretly filmed in stadium restroom, faces blackmail

BENGALURU

A 32-year-old woman has alleged that she was secretly filmed while using the restroom at Koramangala Indoor Stadium during a Women's Throwball and Cricket (WTC) tournament, and is now being blackmailed by an unknown individual demanding a private video call and money. The victim, a resident of Yelahanka, filed a complaint with the Cyber Crime police on February 13. She told authorities that the incident on the second day of the tournament, which was held from February 6 to 8. It was during her visit to the women's restroom that the alleged filming took place. According to the complaint, the miscreant initially reached out to her friend, mistakenly believing the Instagram account belonged to the victim. Once her friend saw the video and photos, she immediately alerted the victim. The miscreant then began threatening the victim, demanding video calls and money, and claimed he would release additional private videos.

BNCC holds progress review meet

BENGALURU

A progress review meeting was held on Tuesday at the Office of the Joint Commissioner, Bagalagunte Zone-2, Hesaraghatta Main Road, under the joint Chairmanship of Commissioner of Bengaluru North City Corporation, Pommala Sunil Kumar and MLA of Dasarahalli Assembly Constituency, S Muniraju.

The MLA reviewed and discussed the progress of various departments and ongoing development works related to Ward Nos. 12, 13, 14, and 15 of Dasarahalli Assembly Constituency, including the following key subjects:

POW works, SCP-TSP works, Works under the Nagarothana Scheme, Arterial and Sub-Arterial road works, Distribution of title deeds by the Slum Board, Protection of government lands, Development of parks and lakes, Desilting of stormwater drains, Welfare schemes including subsidy payments to beneficiaries of onti mane schemes, Disposal of e-Khata applications, Filling of potholes and road repair works, Removal of unauthorized / illegal buildings, Encroachment clearance drives on footpaths, Removal of dry and dangerous trees and branches.

After detailed discussions, the Commissioner instructed to expedite and complete POW and SCP-TSP works, Nagarothana Scheme works, and arterial and sub-arterial road works within the zone limits at the earliest.

The Commissioner reviewed matters relating to distribution of title deeds by the Slum Board, protection of government lands, development of parks and lakes, and desilting of stormwater drains, and instructed concerned officials to take necessary action.

Officials were directed to take action to remove unauthorized and illegal buildings, clear encroachments on footpaths, and ensure removal of dry and dangerous trees and branches to safeguard public safety. Officials were instructed to identify all encroached footpaths within Zone-2 limits, fix a schedule, and carry out encroachment clearance drives in coordination with the corporation teams.

Officials were directed to ensure effective implementation of welfare schemes so that benefits reach the public efficiently. Strict instructions were also given to identify and remove unauthorized and illegal buildings within the zone limits.

The meeting was attended by Joint Commissioner Pallavi, Chief Engineer Yamuna, Superintendent Engineer Krishnakumar, officials of various departments of the City Corporation, and Police Department officials.

HC orders inspection of PGAWA to check norm adherence

BENGALURU

The High Court has ordered an inspection of the premises of members of the Paying Guest Accommodation Welfare Association (PGAWA), Bengaluru, to assess whether they have conformed to the guidelines issued by the civic authorities.

Justice Suraj Govindaraj observed in his order that the authorities have to examine whether the constructions put up by the petitioners and members of the petitioner association are in accordance with the sanctioned plan. If no plan sanction was granted, they have to examine whether it is in accordance with the applicable building bylaws in all respects and whether the use of the premises is permitted under the relevant zonal regulations.

The inspection has to be carried out from 10.30 am on February 18 and completed within two weeks thereafter.

The Court said the petitioners could participate in the inspection if they chose to do so, or depute their respective representatives. In the event of the petitioners not participating in the inspection and/or not cooperating with the inspection, they would not be entitled to any equitable consideration, the judge added, while directing the matter to be listed for further consideration on March 16.

The petitioner association has challenged various notices issued by BBMP, the then civic authority, to its members in 2024-25.

BBMP had mandated that each facility must have all entries, exits, and corridors under CCTV surveillance, with software and hardware to ensure the storage of 90 days of footage from each camera. It said it must be ensured that, as per occupancy-related building norms, every occupant has not less than 70sqft of space per head, and that the licence must be issued for a particular number of occupants. It also mandated that facilities must have clean and hygienic washroom facilities for the occupants, and a source of potable drinking water. It said if the facility has its own mass kitchen, then it must obtain an FSSAI licence within three months of service of the trade licence from BBMP.

Dubai cops in B'luru to study Safe City Project

BENGALURU

A high-level delegation from Dubai Police, led by Brigadier Turki Bin Fares, Director of the General Department of Operations, visited the Bengaluru City Police headquarters on Monday to study technology-driven initiatives under the Safe City project. The team toured the police Command and Control Centre, the Namma 112 integrated emergency response platform, and the Traffic Management Centre (TMC).

The officers held detailed discussions with City Police Commissioner B. Dayananda and senior officials on modern policing practices, focusing on the extensive CCTV network, analytical tools, and other tech-enabled law enforcement strategies. They examined the command room equipped with real-time surveillance and Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) systems, and reviewed the functioning of Namma 112, which integrates police, fire and ambulance services under a single emergency helpline.

At the TMC, the delegation observed intelligent transportation systems, live traffic monitoring and digital mobility solutions. The visitors appreciated the quick response time of Namma 112, women's safety islands and large-scale crowd management during New Year celebrations, noting Bengaluru's success in policing a large and diverse population.

Blackspots down by a quarter across Bengaluru in 6 months

BENGALURU

There was a 28% reduction in garbage blackspots across the city in the past six months, with the number dropping from 1,144 in September 2025 to 823 in February 2026, according to data from Bengaluru Solid Waste Management Limited (BSWML).

Officials said the decline reflects sustained solid waste management interventions across multiple city corporations, though the pace and nature of action have varied across regions.

While west and south Bengaluru showed sharper corrections in clearing chronic dumping points through enforcement and coordinated clean-up drives, the central and northern zones intensified monitoring and infrastructure-led responses to tackle persistent garbage hotspots.

In Bengaluru West city corporation's jurisdiction, blackspots declined sharply from

281 to 190. Localities such as Rajajinagar, Vijayanagar, and Basavanagudi saw sustained clearance of chronic dumping points, aided by tighter surveillance, improved door-to-door waste collection, and stronger ward-level enforcement to prevent fresh accumulation, officials said. Bengaluru South city corporation also recorded notable progress, bringing the blackspot count down from 173 to 119.

Jayanagar, Padmanabhanagar, and BTM Layout reported visible improvement following focused clean-up drives, closer supervision by ward officials, and continuous monitoring mechanisms aimed at curbing re-dumping. In contrast, Bengaluru East city corporation registered only a marginal drop in numbers, from 167 to 146, the lowest improvement across the city's civic jurisdictions. Rapidly expanding areas like KR Pura and Mahadevapura continued to account for a significant number of illegal dumping sites, underscoring the pressures of fast-paced urbanisation, construction debris generation, and inconsistent waste segregation practices.

In Bengaluru Central city corporation, the focus was on institutionalising monitoring mechanisms aligned with the Swachh Survekshan standards, officials said. Civic authorities trained field teams on evaluation criteria and compliance benchmarks, while appointing a Deputy General Manager and a dedicated nodal officer to track garbage blackspot removal and toilet maintenance.

PROPERTY AUCTION FOR TAX DUES

'Will recover property tax dues via auction of defaulted properties'

BENGALURU

In cases where property owners within the KR Puram Zone jurisdiction of the Bengaluru East City Corporation have failed to pay property tax for more than one year, stringent action will be initiated to recover the pending dues through auction of such properties, said Dr Sudha, Joint Commissioner of KR Puram Zone.

Under the provisions of the Greater Bengaluru Governance Act 2025, it is mandatory for all property owners or occupiers within the city corporation limits to pay property tax annually. In cases where property tax remains unpaid for more than one year, recovery procedures are undertaken as per the Property Tax Assessment, Collection and Administration Rules 2024.

As per the Act and Rules, show-cause notices and demand notices were issued to property tax defaulters, granting sufficient time for payment.

Despite repeated reminders, including periodic mobile message notifications, certain property owners have continued to default on payment, the Joint Commissioner stated.

After providing ample opportunities, it has been decided to initiate distress sale (auction) proceedings against 33 defaulted properties within the KR Puram Zone in accordance with the law and rules.

As part of the next step, the auction process will be conducted on February 21 at 11.00 AM in front of the Joint Commissioner's Office, KR Puram Zone-2.The public are hereby invited to participate in the auction process.

However, if the defaulting property owners clear the entire pending property tax dues before the commencement of the auction process, the concerned property will be withdrawn from the auction. Property owners may also submit any representations or grievances to the Joint Commissioner's Office prior to the auction.

QUICK READ

Grand Shivaji Maharaj Jayanti Celebration on February 19

Chitradurga

The district administration, in association with the Zilla Panchayat, Kannada and Culture Department, and City Municipal Council, will celebrate the birth anniversary of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in a grand manner on February 19 at 11 am. The programme will be held at the Deputy Commissioner's Office auditorium in the city. Planning and Statistics Minister as well as District In-charge Minister D. Sudhakar will inaugurate the event. MLA K.C. Veerendra Pappi. Members of Parliament Govind M. Karjol and several legislators including B.G. Govindappa (Hosadurga), T. Raghumurthy (Challakere), N.Y. Gopalakrishna (Molakalmuru), and M. Chandrappa (Holalkere) will participate as distinguished guests.

Sarvajna Jayanti Celebration Scheduled on February 20

Chitradurga

The district administration, in collaboration with the Zilla Panchayat, Kannada and Culture Department, City Municipal Council, Kumbara Gundayya Mahasansthana, Chitradurga District Kumbara Welfare Association, and Karnataka Kumbara Mahila Mahasabha, will celebrate the birth anniversary of Sarvajna on February 20 at 11 am. The programme will take place at the Deputy Commissioner's Office auditorium in the city. Planning and Statistics Minister and District In-charge Minister D. Sudhakar will inaugurate the event. MLA K.C. Veerendra Pappi will preside over the programme.

Two Lorries Seized for Illegal Chemical Dumping

Tumakuru

In a significant action against environmental violations, officials seized two lorries that were allegedly involved in illegally dumping chemical waste into a Rajakaluve (stormwater drain) in the city. The incident came to light following complaints from local residents who noticed foul odors and unusual discoloration in the water flowing through the drain. Acting promptly on the information received, officials from the concerned department, along with local authorities, conducted an inspection at the site. During the operation, two lorries were caught red-handed while allegedly discharging chemical waste into the Rajakaluve. The vehicles were immediately taken into custody.

Police Role Crucial in Child Protection Efforts

Child-friendly policing requires empathy, coordination, and strict action against child marriage violations

CHITRADURGA

Police stations cannot become child-friendly merely through colorful paint or banners, said Dr. K.T. Tippeswamy, Member of the Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights, emphasizing that genuine sensitivity towards distressed children is essential to reform the system. He was speaking after inaugurating a one-day training programme for SJPU unit officers and staff at the District Panchayat hall in Chitradurga.

The training programme was organized jointly by the Directorate of Child Protection, District Administration, Zilla Panchayat, Police Department, Women and Child Development Department, and the District Child Protection Unit. Sessions focused on the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, POCSO Act, Juvenile Justice Act, and Mission Vatsalya scheme.

Dr. Tippeswamy noted that while uniforms and authority symbolize power in the police department, handling child-related cases requires compassion and humanity above all. The attitude and behavior of officers toward children visiting police stations play a decisive role in delivering justice. He compared child protection to nurturing a sapling with water, manure, and fencing, stressing that coordinated efforts among the Education Department, Women and Child Development Department, and Police are vital to safeguard children's rights.

Quoting Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, he remarked that the success of the Constitution depends on those implementing it. Effective enforcement of the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015 requires officials to act with empathy rather than mechanical duty. Recalling an incident under the Open House initiative where a child courageously approached authorities to stop her child marriage, he urged police to strengthen their commitment to ensuring justice for every child.

Deputy Director of Women and Child Development K.H. Vijay Kumar revealed that over 3,800 cases of minor pregnancies have been reported in the district in the last five years. However, only 1 to 2 percent resulted in FIRs, and merely 10 percent came to the department's notice, raising serious concern.

To combat child marriage, the department has surveyed nearly 54,000 girls below 18 years across the district, obtaining written undertakings from parents pledging not to marry their daughters before 18. Awareness drives are being conducted through schools, anganwadi centers, and ASHA workers. Strict legal action has been warned against parents and those assisting illegal marriages.

MLAs Travelling Abroad Is Personal Choice: Hussain

RAMANAGARA

Legislators travelling abroad are doing so out of their own free will and personal choice, clarified Iqbal Hussain while addressing reporters in the city. He stated that there is no compulsion from the party or the government regarding such visits.

Speaking to the media, Iqbal Hussain said that public representatives often travel abroad to study development models, governance systems, infrastructure projects, and innovative administrative practices. Such visits, he noted, help lawmakers gain exposure to global best practices that can later be adapted for the benefit of their constituencies.

He emphasized that every MLA has the right to decide whether to participate in study tours or overseas visits. It is entirely their personal decision. No one is being forced to go, he clarified, responding to recent discussions surrounding legislators' foreign travel.

The MLA further pointed out that study tours are not a new practice and have been part of governance for many years.

Legislators' foreign tours are undertaken voluntarily, says MLA Iqbal Hussain in city.

According to him, understanding international models in sectors such as urban planning, water management, public transportation, and digital governance can contribute to more effective policy implementation back home.

Iqbal Hussain also underlined that elected representatives remain accountable to the people of their constituencies. He said that any official travel undertaken by MLAs follows established procedures and guidelines. Transparency and adherence to rules are maintained in such matters, he added.

Addressing criticism, he remarked that development-oriented exposure visits should not be misinterpreted. Instead, the focus should remain on how the knowledge gained from such tours can be utilized to improve public services and infrastructure.

Reiterating his stand, the MLA concluded that travel decisions rest with individual legislators and are not dictated by external pressure, stressing that responsible governance and constituency development remain the primary priorities of all elected representatives.

Turning Chakrabavi VSSN polls into prestige battle is unjust, says A. Manjunath

'VSSN Election Should Not Become Prestige Issue'

RAMANAGARA

The election of the Chakrabavi VSSN Cooperative Society should not be turned into a matter of prestige, said A. Manjunath, questioning the motives behind attempts to politicize the local body polls.

Addressing media persons, Manjunath expressed concern that certain individuals and groups are treating the Chakrabavi VSSN (Village Service Cooperative Society) election as a prestige contest rather than a democratic process meant to strengthen grassroots institutions. He stated that cooperative societies are formed to serve farmers and members, not to become platforms for political rivalry.

He emphasized that VSSN societies play a crucial role in providing agricultural loans, fertilizers, seeds, and other essential services to rural communities. Turning such institutions into arenas for ego clashes and political one-upmanship, he said, defeats their very purpose. These elections should focus on service and development, not on settling scores or showcasing influence, he remarked.

Manjunath further pointed out that cooperative bodies function best when members work together in unity. Internal conflicts and prestige-based politics could hamper the smooth functioning of the society and adversely affect farmers who depend on timely financial and material assistance.

He urged all contesting candidates and their supporters to maintain decorum and ensure a peaceful, transparent election process. According to him, healthy competition is welcome in democracy, but unnecessary tensions and attempts to dominate the institution for prestige undermine public trust.

The leader also appealed to voters to elect candidates who are committed to strengthening the cooperative movement and addressing the needs of farmers, rather than those driven by personal ambitions. He stressed that development of the village and welfare of members should remain the top priority.

Concluding his statement, Manjunath called for unity and cooperation among all stakeholders, stating that the Chakrabavi VSSN election should serve as an example of democratic values rather than a battleground for prestige politics.

Opposition questions MLA's self-funded foreign trip

CHIKKABALLAPUR

A debate has erupted in political circles after opposition parties raised objections to a legislator travelling abroad at his own expense. Supporters of the MLA have strongly defended the visit, stating that since the trip is being funded personally and not through public money, there is no valid reason for criticism.

According to sources, the MLA has travelled overseas for personal reasons, and officials clarified that no government funds were utilized for the visit. However, opposition leaders have attempted to question the timing and intent of the foreign trip, alleging that public representatives must remain available to address local issues. Reacting sharply to the allegations, ruling party leaders stated that it is unfair to politicize a personal matter. They argued that as long as no public resources are involved and official responsibilities are being managed appropriately, such criticism is unwarranted. Finding fault in a private visit undertaken at personal expense reflects the opposition's tendency to create controversy without substance, a senior leader remarked. Supporters further emphasized that elected representatives, like any other citizen, are entitled to personal travel, provided it does not hinder their constitutional duties.

ZP CEO Visits Students Ahead of SSLC Exams

TUMAKURU

With the SSLC examinations fast approaching, the Zilla Panchayat Chief Executive Officer (CEO) visited the homes of students in the city to review their preparedness and encourage them ahead of the crucial academic milestone. The visit was aimed at assessing the level of pre-examination preparation and ensuring that students are receiving the necessary academic support.

During the interaction, the CEO personally spoke with students and their parents, inquiring about study schedules, revision plans, and any challenges they might be facing. The official emphasized the importance of systematic preparation, time management, and maintaining confidence during the examination period. Students were advised to focus on understanding concepts thoroughly rather than relying solely on memorization.

The CEO also reviewed the availability of study materials, textbooks, and supplementary resources provided under government schemes. Instructions were issued to education department officials to ensure that no student is deprived of essential learning support. Special attention was given to students from economically weaker sections to confirm that they have access to a conducive study environment.

Encouraging words were shared with students to boost their morale and reduce exam-related stress. The CEO reminded them that consistent effort and disciplined preparation are key to achieving good results. Parents were urged to create a calm and supportive atmosphere at home to help children concentrate effectively.

Additionally, feedback was gathered regarding the functioning of schools, extra coaching sessions, and revision classes organized for SSLC candidates. The official assured that any gaps identified during the visits would be addressed promptly in coordination with school authorities and teachers.

The initiative reflects the district administration's proactive approach in ensuring a smooth and stress-free examination process.

Sports Kits Distributed to Academy Students

CHIKKABALLAPUR

Sports kits were distributed to students of the Viswanath–Gavaskar Academy at the Sai Krishnan Sports Stadium in Muddenahalli during a special programme held to encourage budding athletes.

The initiative aimed at supporting young cricketers by equipping them with essential gear and boosting their confidence ahead of upcoming tournaments and training sessions.

The event witnessed the presence of academy officials, coaches, local dignitaries, and parents. Addressing the gathering, organizers highlighted the importance of providing quality infrastructure and equipment to nurture sporting talent at the grassroots level. They noted that access to proper kits plays a crucial role in enhancing performance and ensuring safety during practice and matches.

Students of the academy received cricket kits comprising bats, pads, gloves, helmets, and other necessary equipment.

The distribution was carried out in an organized manner, with each student being handed the kit amid applause from attendees. Coaches expressed satisfaction that the new gear would help trainees focus better on skill development and competitive preparation.

Forest Fire Sparks Massive Traffic Gridlock

CHIKKABALLAPUR

A fire broke out in the forest area located opposite Nagamantapa, triggering panic among commuters and leading to a massive traffic jam stretching for several kilometers. Thick plumes of smoke engulfed the surroundings, severely affecting visibility on the adjoining main road and disrupting the smooth flow of vehicles.

According to eyewitnesses, the blaze started in the dry vegetation during the afternoon hours and spread rapidly due to strong winds and parched conditions. Within minutes, flames intensified, sending dense smoke across the roadway. Motorists were forced to slow down or halt their vehicles as visibility dropped drastically, resulting in long queues of cars, buses, and trucks on both sides of the stretch.

EXAM LEAK PREVENTION

Strict Vigil Urged to Prevent Question Paper Leak

TUMAKURU

In view of the upcoming examinations, the District Commissioner has issued strict instructions to concerned departments and officials to take all necessary precautions to prevent any leakage of question papers. During a review meeting held in the city, the DC emphasized that maintaining the integrity and confidentiality of examination processes is of utmost importance.

The DC directed education department officials, examination center superintendents, and police authorities to coordinate closely and implement comprehensive security arrangements. Special vigilance has been ordered at printing presses, storage facilities, and distribution points where question papers are handled. Officials have been instructed to ensure that sealed packets are transported under tight security and that proper documentation is maintained at every stage.

Highlighting the seriousness of question paper leaks, the DC warned that any negligence would invite strict disciplinary action against responsible personnel. Surprise inspections may be conducted at examination centers and storage locations to verify compliance with guidelines. The administration has also

asked authorities to deploy adequate police personnel at sensitive centers to prevent unauthorized access.

The DC stressed the importance of maintaining transparency and fairness in examinations, noting that even minor lapses could damage the credibility of the education system and adversely affect students' futures. Instructions have also been given to restrict the use of mobile phones and electronic gadgets in and around examination centers to minimize risks.

Additionally, officials were told to brief invigilators and staff members about their responsibilities and the consequences of misconduct. Helpline numbers may be activated to receive information about any suspicious activities related to the examinations.

QUICK READ

Budanuru Utsav 2026 Painting Competition Held

Mandya

As part of Budanuru Utsav–2026 celebrations, a painting competition was organized at the premises of Sri Kashi Vishwanath and Anantha Padmanabha Temple in New Budanuru village of Mandya district on February 17. The event aimed to encourage children to actively participate in extra-curricular activities alongside their academic pursuits. Addressing the gathering, MLC and Vice Chairman of the Karnataka State Guarantee Schemes Implementation Authority, Dinesh Gooligowda, emphasized that students must cultivate interest not only in textbooks but also in activities such as painting, music, and sports.

Autonomous Women's College Announces PG Results Swiftly

Mandya

In a notable display of academic efficiency, the Government Women's College (Autonomous), Mandya, announced the postgraduate examination results on the very day the final examination concluded. The swift declaration of results for the 2025–26 academic year has been widely appreciated as a testament to the institution's disciplined administration and coordinated efforts. The postgraduate examinations included M.A. courses in Kannada, Sociology, History, and Economics; M.Sc. in Chemistry; and M.Com. in Commerce. The examinations were conducted from February 3 to February 16, concluding on February 16. By 4:00 pm on the same day, the evaluation process was successfully completed.

Mandya to Celebrate Chhatrapati Shivaji Jayanti

Mandya

The district administration, in association with the Kannada and Culture Department, has organized the celebration of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Jayanti on February 19 at 11:00 am. The event will be held at the library auditorium in the premises of Kalamandira in Mandya. Union Minister for Steel and Heavy Industries H. D. Kumaraswamy will grace the occasion with his esteemed presence. Agriculture and District Incharge Minister N. Cheluvarayaswamy will inaugurate the programme. Chairman of Chamundeshwari Electricity Supply Corporation Limited and Srirangapatna MLA A.B. Ramesh Bandisiddegowda, Karnataka State Pollution Control Board Chairman and Malavalli MLA P.M. Narendra Swamy, and Chairman of the State SC/ST Commission Dr. Moorthy will attend as special guests.

Bonded Labour Eradication Awareness Drive Launched

Citizens urged to report bonded labour cases to helpline 1552 immediately

CHIKKABALLAPUR

Chief Executive Officer of Zilla Panchayat, Dr. Y. Naveen Bhatt, appealed to the public to uphold social responsibility by reporting any instances of bonded labour in the district by calling the helpline number 1552. He was speaking after inaugurating the Bonded Labour System Abolition Day and Awareness Programme held at the District Panchayat auditorium on Tuesday.

Addressing the gathering, Dr. Bhatt highlighted that nearly 85 percent of families today use smartphones, making it increasingly difficult for forced or bonded labour practices to remain hidden. Whether in rural villages or urban localities, such exploitation cannot go unnoticed by neighbours and local residents. He urged citizens to come forward with information, assuring that competent authorities would initiate bonded labour release and rehabilitation measures while taking strict legal action against those responsible for forcing or facilitating such practices.

Providing historical context, he noted that bonded labour originated during the pre-Independence era, particularly in the 1800s, under the Zamindari and jajmani systems. Social inequality and poverty often compelled vulnerable families to take loans, trapping them and even their future generations in forced labour. The enactment of the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act in 1975 marked a significant and permanent step toward eradicating the practice. In Chikkaballapur district alone, 2,352 labourers have been identified, freed, and rehabilitated so far.

Dr. Bhatt also mentioned that organisations working towards bonded labour eradication have sought improvements in the existing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). A meeting under the chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner will be convened, and resolutions passed will be forwarded to the state level for consideration.

Authorities are collecting data from brick kilns, poultry farms, and construction sites to ensure that no worker is trapped in bonded labour. Awareness initiatives will continue to prevent future exploitation.

Senior Civil Judge and Member Secretary of the District Legal Services Authority, B. Shilpa, expressed concern that bonded labour persists in modern forms, including forced domestic work and child care in urban areas. District Bar Association President K.V. Abhilash also observed that bonded labour has evolved into new dimensions, even appearing in corporate sectors, and stressed the need for proactive administrative action.

Madivala Machideva Jayanti Celebration Today In City

District administration to organise procession and cultural programme at Kannada Bhavan.

CHIKKABALLAPUR

The District Administration, Zilla Panchayat and the Department of Kannada and Culture will jointly celebrate the Jayanti of saint and social reformer Madivala Machideva on February 18 at 12 noon at Kannada Bhavan in the city.

According to an official release, the celebration will be held with due reverence and traditional fervour to commemorate the contributions and ideals of Madivala Machideva, who preached equality, social justice and spiritual values. The event aims to spread awareness about his life, teachings and relevance in contemporary society.

As part of the Jayanti celebrations, a grand procession will be organised in the morning. The procession will commence at 10 am from in front of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Bhavan and proceed up to Kannada Bhavan. The floral palanquin carrying the portrait of Madivala Machideva will be the central attraction of the procession.

Several folk troupes will participate in the procession, presenting traditional art forms and cultural performances, adding colour and vibrancy to the event. The organisers stated that the procession will pass through prime routes of the city before culminating at the venue of the main programme.

The main function at Kannada Bhavan will begin at 12 noon, where dignitaries from the district administration, elected representatives, community leaders and members of various organisations are expected to participate. Floral tributes will be offered, and speakers will highlight the life history, social reforms and enduring legacy of the revered saint.

The district authorities have requested media representatives to attend and provide coverage of the Jayanti celebrations. Arrangements have been made to ensure smooth conduct of the procession and the main event, with necessary security and civic measures in place.

Officials appealed to the public to take part in large numbers and make the celebration a meaningful tribute to the ideals of equality and harmony espoused by Madivala Machideva.

Hearings, rally, scholarship extension and civic meetings announced for Feb 18

Multiple Public Events Scheduled Across Mangaluru

MANGALURU

Several important public programmes, hearings and civic events are scheduled to take place across the city and district on February 18, with authorities inviting media representatives and the public to participate.

The Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission will conduct a public hearing on electricity tariff revision on February 18 at 11 am at the corporate office of Mangalore Electricity Supply Company Limited (MESCOM) located at Bijai. The hearing is being held to gather public opinion following the annual performance review petition filed by MESCOM before the Commission. Interested consumers and stakeholders may attend and present their views.

On the same day at 11.30 am, the Karnataka State Human Rights Commission will hold a public grievance hearing at the Netravati Hall of the Zilla Panchayat. Citizens with pending complaints may appear and present their grievances.

Meanwhile, the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) 'CISF Vande Mataram Coastal Cyclothon 2026' bicycle rally will arrive in Mangaluru on February 18. The district administration will officially welcome the rally at 5.30 pm near Chitrapura Gate, Baikampady. A public meeting and cultural programme will be organised at Panambur Beach at 7 pm.

In a separate press release, the Minority Welfare Department has extended the deadline for post-matric scholarship applications under the fee reimbursement scheme for minority students belonging to Muslim, Christian, Jain, Buddhist, Sikh and Parsi communities for the academic year 2025-26. Students may apply online through the State Scholarship Portal (SSP) until February 28.

The District Disaster Management Authority, in coordination with the National Disaster Management Authority and various departments, successfully conducted a mock drill on management of hazardous chemical accidents at the Thanneerubavi IMC unit. The drill demonstrated rescue operations, fire response, traffic control and emergency medical services involving over 100 personnel, including fire services, police, health officials, 11 ambulances and disaster response teams.

Student Aspiring To Be Swamiji Dies Tragically

BANDALLI

A tragic incident has cast a pall of gloom over Bandalli village following the untimely death of a young student who had dreamt of becoming a swamiji and dedicating his life to spiritual service. According to sources, the student, known among family and friends for his deep interest in religious studies and spiritual practices, met with a fatal accident under unfortunate circumstances on Tuesday.

The incident has left the local community in shock, as the boy was described as disciplined, soft-spoken and spiritually inclined from a young age. Residents said the student often expressed his desire to pursue religious education and eventually take up sainthood.

Law Graduates Incentive Scheme: Applications Invited

GADAG

Applications have been invited for the 2025-26 incentive scheme aimed at supporting newly graduated law professionals in the state as they begin their legal careers. The financial assistance programme is designed to help young advocates gain experience under senior lawyers during the initial phase of their professional journey.

As per the official notification, eligible advocates will receive a monthly incentive of Rs.2,000 for a period of 24 months. The scheme intends to ease financial constraints faced by fresh law graduates while they establish themselves in the legal field.

To qualify, applicants must have enrolled with the State Bar Council between June 1, 2024 and May 31, 2025. Additionally, the applicant's annual income should not exceed Rs.40,000. The authorities clarified that only those meeting these eligibility criteria will be considered for the incentive.

Advocates registered with the Taluk Bar Council are required to submit their applications through the respective Senior Civil Judge of their taluk. Those enrolled with the District Bar Council must submit their applications directly to the Principal District and Sessions Judge, who also serves as the Chairman of the District Law Graduates Incentive Selection Committee.

The last date for submission of applications is March 17, 2026. Applications received after the stipulated deadline will not be entertained under any circumstances, the notification stated.

For further details and clarification regarding the scheme, applicants may contact the office of the Principal District and Sessions Court, Gadag.

Lambani Community, a Symbol of Pride: Minister

GADAG

Emphasising the importance of education in the modern global era, Karnataka Law, Justice, Human Rights, Parliamentary Affairs and Tourism Minister and Gadag District In-charge Minister H.K. Patil called upon the Lambani community to prioritise education and contribute towards building a strong and progressive nation.

He was speaking after inaugurating the Jayanti celebrations of Sant Sevalal organised on Tuesday at the District Administration Bhavan auditorium by the district administration, Zilla Panchayat and the Department of Kannada and Culture.

Minister H.K. Patil said education plays a crucial role in shaping a better society and strengthening the nation. He noted that the Lambani community, known for its rich cultural heritage and strong civic values, must move forward by giving greater emphasis to education. In today's competitive world, empowerment through knowledge is essential, he remarked.

Highlighting the community's cultural identity, he said the Lambanis have preserved their traditions and values despite changing times, drawing inspiration from Sant Sevalal. He described the community as a symbol of self-respect and integrity, known for honouring commitments and upholding unity. The Minister also pointed out that the Lambani population across the country is significant, estimated at around 12 crore. In Gadag district, several tandas have been converted into revenue villages to ensure better access to government schemes and facilities.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The General Public is hereby informed that my client Sri. Honnaiah A. son of late. Ajjappa, aged about 64 years, residing at No. 381, 6th 'B' Cross, Health Layout, Shreegandada Kaval, Handra Halli, Vishwaneedam Post, Bengaluru– 560091.

has lost an original property documents i.e., original Sale deed bearing registration No.5405/2009-10 dated: 16-11-2009, registered in the office of the Sub-Registrar, Ramanagara, pertaining to the Mangalore Tile residential house property bearing Khaneshumari No. 166/2, measuring East to West: 30 feet, North to South: 45 feet, totally measuring 1350 square feet, situated at Channamanahalli Village, Kylancha Hobali, Ramanagara Taluk, Bengaluru South District (earlier Ramanagara District) on 15-02-2026 near Ijoor Bus Stop, Ramanagara. A lost report has been registered by me under vide Lost Report No. 2065938/2026 through online. Finders may return the same to the Ijoor Police Station Ramanagara or contact me at the below address within 07 days from this publication.

Signed/-
Mr. Nagachandra. R., Advocate,
Office address: No. 59/A,
Chiranjeevi Nilaya, Jalamangala Road, Hanumanthanagara,
Ramanagara Town–562159.
Mobile No:
88849 00848, 98868 27848.

NAME CHANGE

I, **KHAZIM AHMED** , S/o, Basha Saheb, Resident of No 783/1,Madina Road Cross kinath Mohalla Daira Channapatna Ramanagar Dist, 571428, have changed my name to **SYED KAZEEM** , vide affidavit dated: 17.02.2026 before notary B.A. LAKSHMINARAYANA RAO, Bengaluru.

NAME CHANGE

I, **AYESHA BANO** , W/o, Nawaz Khan, Resident of No 32 Ward No 23,Tippu nagara Near Tippu Masjid Ramanagaram Dist, 562159, have changed my name to **AYESHA BANU** , vide affidavit dated: 17.02.2026 before notary B.A. LAKSHMINARAYANA RAO, Bengaluru.

YUVANIDHI SKILL DRIVE

Yuvanidhi Beneficiaries Urged To Gain Skills in Chitradurga

CHITRADURGA

District Guarantee Schemes Implementation Authority President Shivanna R. Ganjigatte called upon beneficiaries of the Yuvanidhi scheme to utilise skill training opportunities and become self-reliant rather than depending solely on unemployment allowance.

He was speaking after inaugurating a skill training and awareness programme organised on Tuesday at the Government Science College auditorium by the district administration, Zilla Panchayat, District Guarantee Schemes Implementation Authority and the Department of Skill Development, Entrepreneurship and Livelihood.

Shivanna Ganjigatte said that the Yuvanidhi Scheme, one of the five guarantee schemes of the State Government, plays a significant role in providing financial and psychological support to graduates and diploma holders awaiting employment. Graduates receive Rs.3,000 per month and diploma holders Rs.1,500 per month under the scheme until they secure jobs.

However, he emphasised that the government's objective is not merely to provide financial assistance but to ensure that youth enhance their skills and secure meaningful employment. Various banks and training institutions are collaborating to offer skill development programmes to beneficiaries, enabling them to improve their employability.

District Skill Development Officer Sannakki Maruti said the government aims to provide free training through institutions such as GTTC and ITIs and ensure at least 70 percent placement for trained candidates. Skilled youth, he noted, contribute significantly to the nation's economy, and beneficiaries should take full advantage of the opportunity to build dignified, self-reliant lives.

RUDSET institution lecturer Thotappa highlighted the importance of practical technical skills in addition to academic qualifications. He said training programmes ranging from two months to one year are available in mechanical, automation and electronics fields, including modern automation technologies in the manufacturing sector. Free training is offered particularly to SC, ST and minority candidates, and successful trainees are assisted with job placements in reputed companies.

Officials including Employment Officer Ravindra, GTTC Principal Suhas, Assistant Statistical Officer Vemanna, Government Science College Principal Ravikant and Canara Bank financial literacy attended the programme.

Delhi CM announces Rs 800 cr road makeover plan

Entire roads will be strengthened edge-to-edge, improving durability, reducing dust, waterlogging, and frequent repairs effectively

NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta has unveiled a major Rs 802.18 crore project to upgrade 241 roads, spanning nearly 400 km. The initiative will use a "wall-to-wall carpeting" method to make roads pothole-free, even, and long-lasting, aiming for safer and cleaner streets across the capital.

The project will cover 45 Assembly constituencies, including major roads like Outer Ring Road, August Kranti Marg, Rao Tula Ram Marg, Kapashera-Bijwasan Road, Lala Lajpat Rai Marg, Shamnath Marg, D.B. Gupta Road, and several others. The Centre will fund Rs 643.36 crore through the Central Road Infrastructure Fund, while the Delhi government will contribute Rs 158.82 crore.

Under the new model, entire road stretches will be uniformly strengthened from edge to edge, unlike past repairs that focused only on central portions or isolated potholes.

This approach will improve durability, reduce frequent repairs, and minimise dust and particulate matter pollution. Officials highlighted that damaged roads generate airborne fine particles, worsening air quality, and that the resurfacing will also improve drainage and reduce waterlogging during monsoons.

Last year, around 150 km of roads were upgraded using the same technology, demonstrating its effectiveness. The Public Works Department will execute the work in phases to limit traffic disruption. Each road will undergo a detailed technical assessment, base strengthening, proper drainage installation, and final resurfacing according to prescribed standards.

The Chief Minister emphasised that the goal is long-term improvement rather than temporary fixes.

She said that close coordination between the Delhi government and the Centre is driving this transformation, promising smoother, safer, and pollution-reduced roads for citizens by the end of the year.

Tensions rise as motion targets Rahul Gandhi

NEW DELHI

The first half of the Budget session turned tense as a motion against Opposition Leader Rahul Gandhi dominated proceedings. During the discussion on the motion of thanks to the President's address, Gandhi was stopped from quoting unpublished memoirs of a former Army chief, with the Speaker and ruling party members citing parliamentary rules.

The situation escalated when BJP MP Nishikant Dubey moved a substantive motion against Gandhi, accusing him of collaborating with "anti-national forces" and seeking cancellation of his Lok Sabha membership and election disqualification. Substantive motions are usually used in cases of serious criminal misconduct, such as the 2005 "cash for votes" scandal.

Opposition leaders defended Gandhi, stating his criticism of the interim India-US trade deal was a legitimate parliamentary exercise.

Dubey alleged Gandhi's statements aimed to "destabilise" the nation, while opposition parties described it as conflating dissent with anti-national activity. Analysts noted that labeling disagreement as anti-national risks narrowing democratic debate inside and outside Parliament. This is not Gandhi's first brush with disqualification. In March 2023, he was disqualified after a defamation conviction but was reinstated in August 2023 when the Supreme Court stayed his sentence. With tensions high, the incident has renewed discussions on the Leader of the Opposition's role and the importance of protecting dissent in a parliamentary democracy. Political observers say such episodes highlight the fine line between accountability and suppressing debate in India's legislative framework.

Coast Guard, Guj ATS seize drugs near Porbandar

PORBANDAR

In a major maritime operation, the Indian Coast Guard and Gujarat Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) seized over 200 kg of drugs near Porbandar. Two Pakistani nationals were detained during the crackdown, carried out close to the international maritime boundary.

Officials said the operation was based on actionable intelligence about drug smuggling in the region.

The recovered consignment, worth several crores, is under detailed examination. Authorities cautioned that the final quantity and estimated value may rise as investigations continue.

The two detained men are being interrogated to uncover the origin and intended destination of the drugs. Investigators are also probing possible links to larger international trafficking networks. The Coast Guard and ATS are coordinating closely to track the supply chain and prevent future smuggling attempts.

This operation highlights India's efforts to strengthen maritime security and curb cross-border drug trafficking.

QUICK READ

Coast Guard foils oil smuggling operation

MUMBAI

The Indian Coast Guard intercepted three foreign ships off Mumbai, stopping a major oil smuggling network. Vessels Stellar Ruby, Asphalt Star, and Al Jafzia were seized about 100 nautical miles west of the city. Officials say the ships were transferring cheap oil from countries like Russia and Iran to evade taxes. The vessels had changed names and flags to hide their identities. Investigators are examining ship records and questioning crews to uncover the full smuggling operation.

Couple's tragic end after losing son

CHHATTISGARH

A wave of sorrow swept through Dhardei village in Janjgir-Champa district after a couple was found dead in their courtyard. Krishna Patel, 48, and his wife Rama Bai, 47, reportedly ended their lives by hanging from a neem tree. Police said a four-page note was recovered, where the couple cited the accidental death of their 21-year-old son, Aditya, last year as the reason for their extreme step. The incident has left the village in deep grief.

Speeding SUV kills 2 in Jaipur tragedy

JAIPUR

Two young men died in Jaipur on Tuesday after a speeding Scorpio SUV hit their scooter and fled the scene. CCTV footage shows the SUV crashing into the two-wheeler, throwing the riders onto the road. The victims, Virendra and his companion, died on the spot. Police have registered a case and are searching for the driver.

SER INDUSTRIES LIMITED
CIN: : L60231KA1963PLC004604
Regd. Office: Chikkakuntanahalli Village Bidadi Hobli Ramnagaram Taluk, Bengaluru – 562109
Corporate Office: Plot No 79, 501, 5th Floor Lalwani House, Sakore Nagar Viman Nagar, Pune, Maharashtra, India, 411014
Mobile:+91-7249049195 | **Email:** info.serindustries@gmail.com | **Website:** ser-industries.co.in

CORRIGENDUM TO THE NOTICE OF EXTRA ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING DATED FEBRUARY 16, 2026

In continuation to the Extra Ordinary General Meeting Notice dated January 22, 2026 (Notice") sent to the members of the Company on January 28, 2026, the Corrigendum is being issued to inform the shareholders of the Company regarding amendment in Resolution 10,11, and 12; relevant date and respective changes in the Explanatory Statement to the Extraordinary General Meeting Notice as well as additional undertaking annexed to the Corrigendum.

The Corrigendum is electronically dispatched on 16th February 2026 to the Members of the Company whose email addresses are registered with the Company, the registrar or the Depository Participants in compliance with the provisions of the Act, read with relevant rules made thereunder, regulations issued by the SEBI and circulars issued by the MCA.

In the interest of facilitating informed decision-making through e-voting, which commenced on Tuesday, 17 February 2026 at 9:00 A.M. (IST) and will conclude on Thursday, 19, February 2026 at 5:00 P.M. (IST), the Company considers it appropriate to bring to the attention of the Members the updated factual position through this Corrigendum.

This Corrigendum shall form an integral part of the original Notice of Extraordinary General Meeting and is to be read in conjunction therewith.

All other contents of the Extraordinary General Meeting Notice, save and except as amended or clarified through Corrigendum issued by the Company, shall remain unchanged.

This Corrigendum is being uploaded on the Company's website at www.ser-industries.co.in, and on the website of BSE Limited at www.bseindia.com where the shares of the Company are listed.

For **SER Industries Limited**
Sd/-
Sunil Kumar Shahi
Director

Dated on this February 17, 2026.

Bangalore West City Corporation
Malleshwaram Zone
Office of the Executive Engineer, Basavanagudi Division,
BWCC building, Chennamanakere Achchukattu, Vidyapeeta, BSK 3rd stage, Bangalore-85. Telephone No: 080-26792218, Email: bwcceebg@gmail.com

No. EE(BG)/KPPP/TEND/11/2025-26 Date: 17.02.2025

INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER (IFT)
(Through GOK KPPP only)

The Executive Engineer, Basavangudi Division, BWCC invites tender on behalf of the Commissioner, BWCC, Bengaluru from eligible Tenderers registered contractors of Bengaluru West City Corporation or equivalent registration with CPWD / KPWD or any state Governmental Organization for the execution of works detailed in the table below.

Sl.No.	Name of the Package
1	Providing House Keeping Services to All BBMP Office Buildings in Basavanagudi Constituency-Call-II (Single Cover System). Amount Put to tender (Rs in lakhs): **21.16,** EMD (in Rs): **50,000/-,** Period of Completion: **12 months.**
2	Construction of RCC box Culverts in Gavigangadhareshwara Ward Jurisdiction in Ward No.196, Gavigangadhareshwara-Call-II (Single Cover System). Amount Put to tender (Rs in lakhs): **21.18,** EMD (in Rs): **50,000/-,** Period of Completion: **03 months.**

Calendar of events: (1) Tender documents may be downloaded from the GOK Karnataka Public Procurement portal website **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in** from **From 19.02.2026 at 15.00 Hrs onwards. (2)** Last Date & Time for uploading tender documents: **On 27.02.2026 upto 16.00 Hrs. (3)** Pre-Bid Meeting: **On 24.02.2026 at 16.00 Hrs. (4)** Opening of Tender: **On 02.03.2026 at 16.30 Hrs.**

Sd/- Executive Engineer
Basavanagudi Division,
Malleshwaram Zone, BWCC.

GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT DIVISION, VIJAYAPUR.
I.F.T.No:EE/PWD/VJP/PB/2025-26/4832 Dated:17.02.2026

TENDER NOTIFICATION (E-Procurement)

The- **Executive Engineer, Public Works Dept. Division, Vijayapur** Invites tenders from eligible tenderers (registered in Public Works Department) 1 work, As per standard bid documents KW- 4 with 5054 Appendix E head of account **costing of amount for Rs. 500.00 Lakhs, the EMD amount of Rs. 7,50,000/- for the work.** Increase in G.S.T shall not be paid in the extended period of Contract for which the contractor alone is responsible for delay as determined by the authority while granting the extension of time. The calendar events of tenders, dates are fixed as follows 1) Pre-Bid Meeting for Contractors. Date- **16.03.2026** @ 11:00 AM. 2) Last Date for Receipt of Tenders Date- **23.03.2026** at 4:30 PM 3) Opening of Technical Bid Date-**24.03.2026** at 04:31 PM 4) Opening of Financial Bid Date- **25.03.2026** at 04:30 PM onwards. Clause-3 Conditions of Standard Bid Document may be seen in Departmental Website i.e "eproc.karnataka.gov.in" and for more information may contact help desk Bangalore (Phone No. 919240214000 & 919240214001) or office of the undersigned.

Sd/- Executive Engineer, PWD Division, Vijayapur

DIPR/VIJAYAPURA/715/KSMCA/2025-26

CH CLASSIFIEDS To place a classified ad contact: **080-41209042**

ಆಡಳಿತ ವೈದ್ಯಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳ ಕಾರ್ಯಾಲಯ,
ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕ ಹಾಗೂ ತಾಯಿ ಮತ್ತು ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಆಸ್ಪತ್ರೆ, ಚಿಂತಾಮಣಿ ತಾಲ್ಲೂಕು, ಚಿಂತಾಮಣಿ
ಇ–ಮೇಲ್ ವಿಳಾಸ: amocmy@gmail.com, ದೂರವಾಣಿ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: 08154–450758

ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ:ಸಾಆಚಿಂ/ಪಥ್ಯಾಹಾರ ಟೆಂಡರ್/03/2025–26/E-42695 ದಿನಾಂಕ:10.02.2026

ಇ–ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಇ–ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಅಧಿಸೂಚನೆ

ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕ ಆಸ್ಪತ್ರೆ ಚಿಂತಾಮಣಿ ಇಲ್ಲಿ 2026–27 ನೇ ಸಾಲಿಗೆ ಒಳ ರೋಗಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಉತ್ತಮ ದರ್ಜೆಯ ಪಥ್ಯಾಹಾರ ಪದಾರ್ಥಗಳು ಹಾಗೂ ಪ್ರಥಮ ದರ್ಜೆ ಬ್ರೆಡ್ ಸರಬರಾಜು ಮಾಡಲು ಅಲ್ಪಾವಧಿ ಇ–ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪ್ಲಾಟ್‌ಫಾರ್ಮ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ದ್ವಿ–ಲಕೋಟೆ ಪದ್ಧತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ **ಪಥ್ಯಾಹಾರ ಆಹಾರ ಸಾಮಾಗ್ರಿಗಳು ಮತ್ತು ಬ್ರೆಡ್ ಪೂರೈಕೆಗಾಗಿ kppp.karnataka.gov.in** ನಲ್ಲಿ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗಳನ್ನು ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ. ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಅವಧಿಯು ಕಾರ್ಯಾದೇಶ ನೀಡುವ ದಿನಾಂಕದಿಂದ **ದಿನಾಂಕ: 31.03.2027 ರವರೆಗೆ ಮಾತ್ರ ಇರುತ್ತದೆ.** ಒಟ್ಟು ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ನ ಅಂದಾಜು ಮೌಲ್ಯ: **ರೂ: 105 ಲಕ್ಷಗಳು.** ಟೆಂಡರ್ ವಿವರಗಳು ಈ ಕೆಳಗಿನಂತಿರುತ್ತದೆ.

1	ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ & ದಿನಾಂಕ	ಸಾಆಚಿಂ/ಪಥ್ಯಾಹಾರ/ಟೆಂಡರ್/03/2025–26/E-42695 ದಿನಾಂಕ:10.02.2026			
2	ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ಗೆ ಇಟ್ಟ ಅಂದಾಜು ಮೊತ್ತ	ಕ್ರ ಸಂ	ವಿವರ	ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಬಿಡ್ ಮೊತ್ತ (ರೂ. ಲಕ್ಷಗಳಲ್ಲಿ)	
		1	Group A:	ರೂ.83 ಲಕ್ಷ	EMD Rs.
		2	Group B:	ರೂ.22 ಲಕ್ಷ	Rs.2,70,000

(3) E-Portal ಮೂಲಕ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಫಾರಂ ಅಪ್‌ಲೋಡ್ ಮಾಡಲು **ಪ್ರಾರಂಭಿಸುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ: 10.02.2026 (4) E-Portal** ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಲಕೋಟೆಗಳನ್ನು ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವ ಅಂತಿಮ ದಿನಾಂಕ & ಸಮಯ: **10.03.2026ರ ಸಂಜೆ 3.00 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ. (5)** ಪ್ರಿ ಬಿಡ್‌ದಿನಾಂಕ ಮತ್ತು ಸಮಯ: **ದಿನಾಂಕ: 02.03.2026ರಂದು ಸಂಜೆ: 03.00 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ. (6) E-Portal**ನ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಲಕೋಟೆಗಳನ್ನು ಪರಿಶೀಲಿಸುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ ಮತ್ತು ಸಮಯ: **ದಿನಾಂಕ: 12.03.2026ರ ಸಂಜೆ: 03.00 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ. (7) E-Portal** ಆರ್ಥಿಕ ಲಕೋಟೆಗಳನ್ನು ತೆರೆಯುವ ದಿನಾಂಕ ಮತ್ತು ಸಮಯ: **ದಿನಾಂಕ: 16.03.2026 ರಂದು ಬೆಳಿಗ್ಗೆ: 11.00 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ. ಅಥವಾ ಮೇಲಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳು ಸೂಚಿಸಿದ ದಿನಾಂಕದಂದು (8)** ಇ.ಎಂ.ಡಿ ಅನುಬಂಧ–I ರ ನಮೂನೆಯಲ್ಲಿ EMD Declaration ಸಹಿಯೊಂದಿಗೆ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸುವುದು. ಪಥ್ಯಾಹಾರ ಪದಾರ್ಥಗಳು ಮತ್ತು ಬ್ರೆಡ್ ಟೆಂಡರ್‌ನ **ಅಂದಾಜು ಮೌಲ್ಯದ ಶೇ2.5% ರೂ.2,70,000/– (9)** ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಮಾಹಿತಿಗಾಗಿ ಸಂಪರ್ಕಿಸಬೇಕಾದ ಅಧಿಕಾರಿ ಹಾಗೂ ವಿಳಾಸ. ದೂರವಾಣಿ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: **website:www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in.** ಆಡಳಿತ ವೈದ್ಯಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳು, ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕ ಆಸ್ಪತ್ರೆ, ಚಿಂತಾಮಣಿ. **e-mail: amocmy@gmail.com** ದೂರವಾಣಿ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ: 08154–450758

ಸಹಿ/– ಆಡಳಿತ ವೈದ್ಯಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳು, ಸಾರ್ವಜನಿಕ ಆಸ್ಪತ್ರೆ, ಚಿಂತಾಮಣಿ

ವಾಸಾಸಂಇ/ಚಿಕ್ಕಬಳ್ಳಾಪುರ/ಆರ್.ಓ.ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ:423/ಕೆಎಸ್‌ಎಂಸಿಎ/2025–26

ಪುರಸಭಾ ಕಾರ್ಯಾಲಯ, ಕೋನಪ್ಪನ ಅಗ್ರಹಾರ
ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ದಕ್ಷಿಣ ತಾಲ್ಲೂಕು, ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು ನಗರ ಜಿಲ್ಲೆ–560100
E-Mail: ka.konappanaagrahara.tmc@gmail.com

ನಂ.ಪು.ಕಾ.ಕೋ/ತಾಂ.ಶಾ/ಟೆ.ಆರ್/63/2025–26 ದಿನಾಂಕ: 17.02.20526

ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಪ್ರಕಟಣೆ

2025–26ನೇ ಸಾಲಿನ ಪುರಸಭಾ ನಿಧಿಯಡಿ ಕೈಗೊಂಡಿರುವ ಈ ಕೆಳಕಂಡ ಕಾಮಗಾರಿಗಳನ್ನು ನಿರ್ವಹಿಸಲು ಸಂಬಂಧಪಟ್ಟ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಡಾಕ್ಯೂಮೆಂಟ್‌ನ ಷರತ್ತು ಹಾಗೂ ಸೂಚನೆಗೊಳಪಟ್ಟು ನೋಂದಾಯಿತ ಅರ್ಹ ಗುತ್ತಿಗೆದಾರರಿಂದ ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಆಹ್ವಾನಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ.

ಕ್ರ.ಸಂ.	ಇಂಡೆಟ್ ಸಂಖ್ಯೆ	ವರ್ಗ
01	DMA/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT48562/CALL-3 DMA/2025-26/BD/WORK_INDENT48470/CALL-2 DMA/2025-26/OW/WORK_INDENT54632 DMA/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT55130 DMA/2025-26/OW/WORK_INDENT55330	Others
02	DMA/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT55250 DMA/2025-26/RD/WORK_INDENT55245	Reserved

ಟೆಂಡರ್ ದಿನಾಂಕದ ವಿವರಗಳು: ಟೆಂಡರ್ ಸಲ್ಲಿಸಲು ಕೊನೆಯ **ದಿನಾಂಕ: 05.03.2026 ಸಂಜೆ 17.00 ಗಂಟೆಯವರೆಗೆ,** ಟೆಂಡರ್ ತೆರೆಯುವ **ದಿನಾಂಕ: 06.03.2026ರ ಸಾಯಂಕಾಲ 17.15 ಗಂಟೆಗೆ,** ಯಾವುದೇ ದಿನಾಂಕಗಳಲ್ಲಿನ ಮುಂದೂಡಿಕೆ ಮತ್ತು ತಿದ್ದುಪಡಿಗಳಿದ್ದಲ್ಲಿ ಇ–ಪ್ರೊಕ್ಯೂರ್‌ಮೆಂಟ್ ಪೋರ್ಟಲ್‌ನಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರಕಟಿಸಲಾಗುವುದು ಯಾವುದೇ ವಾರ್ತೆ ಪತ್ರಿಕೆಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರಕಟಿಸಲಾಗುವುದಿಲ್ಲ. ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ವಿವರಗಳನ್ನು ಕಛೇರಿಯ ತಾಂತ್ರಿಕ ಶಾಖೆಯಿಂದ ಪಡೆಯಬಹುದಾಗಿದೆ.

ಸಹಿ/– ಮುಖ್ಯಾಧಿಕಾರಿ ಪುರಸಭೆ, ಕೋನಪ್ಪನ ಅಗ್ರಹಾರ

ಸಹಿ/– ಆಡಳಿತಾಧಿಕಾರಿಗಳು ಪುರಸಭೆ, ಕೋನಪ್ಪನ ಅಗ್ರಹಾರ

ವಾಸಾಸಂಇ/ವಾಪ್ರ./ಶಿರಡಿಸಾಯಿ/5690/2025–26

KALABURAGI MAHANAGARA PALIKE, KALABURAGI
Fax No.08472/260776, Phone: 08472/ 278675, Email Id: itstaff_ulb_gulbarga@yahoo.com

No: KMP/TS-01/NCAP/01/2025-26 Date: 16.02.2026

E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTIFICATION

1) Name of Work 1) END TO END PAVING AT GUBBI COLONY MAIN ROAD IN KALABURAGI CITY ESTIMATE COST 150.00 LAKHS 2024-25 NCAP, 2) Hiring of 40 Outsourced Gardeners for the Maintenance of Public Gardens Under Kalaburagi Mahanagara Palike for the year 2025-26. 2) Head of Account: 2024-25 NCAP Fund & 2025-26 Corporation Fund, 3) Tender Amount: Rs. 1,50,00,000.00 & Rs. 1,00,00,000.00 4) Eligibility of Contractor: As Per e-portal, 5) Pre Bid Meeting Date and Time: 05.03.2026, 11:00am, 6) Last Date for Bid Submission: 06.03.2026 Upto 4:30pm, 7) Tender opening Date: 07.03.2026 Upto 4:35pm, 8) Tender Financial Bid opening Date: 10.03.2026 Upto 11.30am, 9) Cost of Tender Schedule : Tender Fee As Per e-portal EMD Max. Rs. 2,25,000.00, Tender Fee As Per e-portal EMD Min. Rs. 2,00,000.00, 10) Contact Address & Mobile No: Executive Engineer, Kalaburagi Mahanagara Palike, Kalaburagi. 9620341599, 11) Web Site: www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in

Sd/- Executive Engineer,
DIPR/Kalaburagi/1084/KSMC&A/2025-26 **Kalaburagi Mahanagara Palike, Kalaburagi.**

MYSORE MEDICAL COLLEGE AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE
(Autonomous body of Government of Karnataka)
Irwin Road, Mysuru, - 570 001.
Ph.No. : +91-0821-2520512, Website: www.mmcri/karnataka.gov.in **E-mail:** mmcrimysore@yahoo.com

No.: MMC&RI/Tender/02/2025-26 **Date:** 12.02.2026

TENDER / SHORT TERM RE-TENDER NOTIFICATION

The Tender and Short-term Re-Tender has been invited as per Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurements Act 1999 for the Supply of Equipment to the attached hospital of Mysore Medical College and Research Institute, Mysore. The Tender documents may bid download from E-procurement website: **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in**. Those tenders which are not submitted with E.M.D will be rejected.

Sl. No.	Tender/ Short term Re-Tender	Commence Date of Tender submission	Last Date of Tender submission	Tender Amount (Rs.Lakhs)
1	Tender Equipment/52/2025-26 Plastic Surgery Equipment	16.02.2026	17.03.2026	197.00
2	Short Term Tender Equipment/53/2025-26 IVF Equipment	16.02.2026	02.03.2026	45.18
3	Tender Equipment/54/2025-26 Blookd Bank Equipment	16.02.2026	17.03.2026	54.00
4	Tender Equipment/48/2025-26 Skin & STD Equipment	16.02.2026	17.03.2026	45.00
5	Tender Equipment/50/2025-26 Furiture	16.02.2026	17.03.2026	198.00

If, the last date for submission of Tender treated as holiday, the next working day will be considered as last date. No Notification in this regard will be announced.

Sd/- Director and Dean
DIPR/MYS/1676/SA/2025-26 Mysore Medical College and Research Institute, Mysuru.

Government of Karnataka
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PANCHAYAT RAJ ENGINEERING DIVISION KALABURAGI

No: EE/PRED/KLB/TS-5/TENDER/2025-26/6160 Date : 13/02/2026

:: TENDER NOTIFICATION ::

(Through E-procurement Two Cover System)

1) Name of work: 1. Construction of C.C. Road from Wadahalli Tanda to Wadahalli village in Afzalpur Taluka Indent No.24278, 2. Improvements to road and Construction of C.D from Agasi to Hittalashiroor village joining road in Benneshiroor village (V. R No. 357) in Alanda Assembly Constituency Indent No.18866, 3. Improvements to Road from Narona - Dhari Tanda main road to Shrichand Mudu Temple at Shrichand village in Aland Taluka Indent No.18883, 4. Improvements to road and Construction of C.D from Benneshirror village to Kulali Railway Station via Yelasangi Cross (V. R No. 197) in Alanda Assembly Constituency Indent No.18879, 5. Formation of road from Sulepeth to Hodebeernalli via Baba Fakruddin Darga at Sulepth, Sulepeth to Dastapur, Bhaktampalli village to Sangam K, Burugpalli main road to Sangappa Shivalingappa field, Contn of CC road from Halkod main road to Potangal, Nayamath Patel land to Haripeer Darga and Hanumantrao Desai land at Iragpalli, Ramesh babu Pujari house to Beerlingeshwar temple at Ganapur, Nanagouda land to Jagadish patil land at Shirolli, Seemi naganna hanadi at Benaknalli Indent No.16498/call-3, 6. Improvements and Asphalting to road from Belakota Gudla village to Mahagaon-V.K.Salagar main road (K.M 0.00 to 4.00) in Kalaburagi Rural Constituency Indent No. 18881, 7. Improvements to road and Construction of C.D from Astaga village to joining road of Syed Chincholi-Narona main road in Kalaburagi Rural Assembly Constituency Indent No. 18882, 8. Improvements of Road from Malghan Tanda Road to Kansur village in Kalagi Taluka in Chittapur Constituency (CD Work) (VR 308) Indent No. 23017, 9. Improvements to road from Kummansirsagi village to Kuranhalli village (2.00 KM) in Yadrami Taluka Indent No. 19493, 10. Improvements to road from Warvi village to Kuknoor village in Yadrami Taluka Indent No. 22732, 11. Construction of Road Leading to Kumbarahalli Lake in Chittapur Taluka Indent No. 23554, 12. Construction of LLC to Fattu Nayak Tanda Approach Road in Chittapur Taluka Indent No. 23552, 13. Construction of Approach Road to Jairam Tanda in Chittapur Taluka Indent No. 23553 **Total 13 Works,** 2) Head of account : **5054 for the year 2023-24, 2024-25 & 2025-26**, 3) Amount put to tender: **Minimum Rs. 50,79,016.14, Maximum Rs. 4,18,40,126.38,** 4) Class of Contractor: Class- III, II and Above, 5) Issue of Blank Tender Documents: **13-02-2026 to 06-03-2026 upto 4.00 pm,** 6) Tender Form Fee: As per KPPP Norms, 7) E.M.D. Fee: Indent No.24388 Rs. 1,02,000.00, Indent No. 24400 Rs. 6,28,000.00, 8) Receipt of completed tender documents: **13-02-2026 to 06-03-2026 upto 4.00 pm,** 9) Technical Bid Opening Date: **07-03-2026 After 4.00 pm**, 10) Financial Bid opening Date: **09-03-2026 After 11.00 am,** 11) For more details contact: Office of the Executive Engineer, Panchayat Raj Engineering Division Opp: Karnataka Grameen Bank (PKGB) Head office, Kusnoor Road, Rajapur Kalaburagi, 12) Website Address: **www.kppp.karnataka.gov.in**

Sd/- Executive Engineer
DIPR/Kalaburagi/1089/KSMC&A/2025-26 **Panchayat Raj Engineering Division Kalaburagi**

QUICK READ

MBA student held for killing girlfriend

INDORE

A shocking crime has been reported from Indore, where a 24-year-old MBA student, Piyush Dhamnotiya, murdered his girlfriend after she refused a physical relationship. Police said he choked her, sat on her chest until she stopped breathing, and then attacked her with a knife. Disturbingly, he later drank beer beside her body, abused the corpse, and attempted occult rituals to "speak to her spirit." Initially on the run, Piyush was arrested and placed under three-day police remand. Investigations are ongoing.

Assam CM questions Babri Masjid replica plan

MIRZAPUR

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma mocked Humayun Kabir's plan to build a Babri Masjid replica in Murshidabad, West Bengal. Calling it a "putlaa" or dummy, Sarma asked, "When the original is gone, what will the putlaa do?" Kabir, a suspended Trinamool Congress MLA who started the Janata Unnayan Party, began constructing the mosque in Beldanga last week. The mosque, set on 11 acres, will hold 12,000 people and is expected to cost Rs 50-55 crore, with completion in two years.

SC orders convict to surrender in actress case

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court dismissed a man's plea challenging his conviction in the 2002 death of Telugu actress Pratyusha and directed him to surrender within four weeks. The bench, comprising Justices Rajesh Bindal and Manmohan, ruled out murder by strangulation or rape. It also rejected a plea by Pratyusha's mother alleging foul play.

Macron highlights India-France ties, multipolar world vision

Macron Pays Tribute to 26/11 Victims, Strengthening Strategic Partnership Between India and France

MUMBAI

French President Emmanuel Macron on Tuesday described the India-France relationship as unique, built on deep mutual trust. Beginning his Mumbai visit with a jog at Marine Drive, Macron paid tribute to the 2008 terror attack victims. He later met Prime Minister Narendra Modi to plan the Horizon 2047 roadmap for the next decade.

Macron highlighted cooperation in defence, industry, and technology, noting India's approval of 114 Rafale jets, mostly "Made in India," and celebrating the launch of the Airbus H125 helicopter assembly line.

He stressed that India and France are moving beyond trade to share ideas in Green Tech, Space, and AI. Launching the India-France Year of Innovation, Macron announced programs for youth exchanges, startups, and academic collaborations.

The President reaffirmed support for India's "Aatmanirbhar Bharat" initiative and permanent UN Security Council seat, describing India as a key Indo-Pacific partner. Macron also called for a free maritime corridor and ethical AI development for the Global South. He concluded that India and France aim to become global leaders in technology, defence, and strategic cooperation.

French President Emmanuel Macron on Tuesday paid tribute to the 2008 Mumbai terror attack victims, highlighting India-France solidarity against terrorism. Accompanied by First Lady Brigitte Macron, he was warmly received by Maharashtra officials and welcomed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who emphasized strengthening bilateral cooperation. During his fourth visit to India, Macron will attend the AI Impact Summit and hold a bilateral meeting with Modi to review the Strategic Partnership and explore collaboration in emerging sectors. A key highlight is the joint launch of the India-France Year of Innovation 2026, promoting technology, research, start-ups, and innovation exchanges between the two nations.

World facing messy global transition: Jaishankar

MUMBAI

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Tuesday described the global landscape as entering a "messy" and unpredictable transition.

Speaking at the inaugural session of the three-day Global Economic Cooperation (GEC) Summit in Mumbai, he said the established global order is changing rapidly.

"Replacements are hard to create, and we appear to be headed for a long twilight zone. This will be risky, unpredictable, perhaps even dangerous," he warned.

Jaishankar noted that elements of the old order will coexist with emerging systems. He added that in decision-making, economics will increasingly give way to politics and security, and technology—especially AI—will be transformative.

EAM S. Jaishankar warns of unpredictable global changes at Mumbai GEC Summit, urging India to strengthen domestic foundations while engaging strategically with international partners.

Highlighting India's strategy, he stressed that the country is focusing on strengthening internal capabilities while expanding its global influence.

"India's response is to build national capabilities, address growth challenges comprehensively, and deal with both short-term issues and long-term prospects. The Reform Express will continue to roll on," he asserted.

The minister pointed to India's robust domestic stability as a foundation for deeper international engagement, including trade deals and leadership in production, services, technology, and talent.

He emphasized that under PM Narendra Modi, practical and people-centric policies have made India a trusted global partner.

Jaishankar participated in the summit alongside Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, underscoring India's proactive approach to navigating an uncertain world while strengthening both domestic governance and global diplomacy.

Green hydrogen prices in India fall to ₹279 per kg, marking a historic milestone in clean energy

India achieves historic low green hydrogen prices

NEW DELHI

India has set a global benchmark as green hydrogen prices drop to a historic low of ₹279 per kilogram, announced Union Minister of New and Renewable Energy, Pralhad Joshi, during "Climate Week 2026" in Mumbai. Under the National Green Hydrogen Mission, this achievement reflects the country's growing role in the global clean energy transition.

At the summit, Joshi also highlighted India's solar power progress.

Through the SuryaGhar scheme, 3 million households now receive free solar electricity via rooftop installations. He described PM SuryaGhar and PM KUSUM as twin engines driving India's solar revolution, enabling farmers and citizens to actively participate in climate sustainability.

This year, India hosted its first global Climate Week and Summit, showcasing leadership in the Global South. Joshi praised Maharashtra and Karnataka for driving economic growth and renewable energy adoption, emphasizing Mumbai's role as a key center of innovation and climate action.

He noted that India's industrial and household electricity rates in Maharashtra have dropped, reflecting the success of large-scale solar initiatives. Joshi credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for India's clean energy achievements, describing them as decisive steps toward global climate sustainability.

The summit was attended by Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, along with senior officials and ministers, demonstrating India's growing commitment to green energy, innovation, and sustainable development, while inspiring other nations to follow suit.

BJD, Cong walk out over Odisha Governor's address

BHUBANESWAR

The Opposition Biju Janata Dal (BJD) and Indian National Congress (INC) on Tuesday slammed Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati's address at the Odisha Assembly and staged a walkout in protest. The Governor delivered his speech on the first day of the Budget Session, highlighting welfare and development initiatives in agriculture, industry, education, healthcare, tourism, and IT sectors, aiming for a "Viksit Odisha" by 2036.

BJD president and Leader of Opposition Naveen Patnaik criticised the address as "strong in words but weak in action," saying it failed to reflect the ground realities. Patnaik also raised concerns over rising mob lynching incidents and said Odisha's law-and-order situation under the BJP-led government is in a dreadful state, alleging that such violence is unparalleled elsewhere in India. Congress Legislature Party leader Rama Chandra Kadam accused the state government of ignoring Odisha's development and failing to protect the state's interests. He said the Governor's speech did not align with the government's statements or actions. The ruling BJP countered, claiming the opposition is confused and unable to accept the state's rapid progress under its administration.

The two-day discussion on the Governor's address will follow the speech, with the State Budget scheduled for February 20, to be presented by Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, who also holds the Finance portfolio.

Mamata confirms 7 suspended AEROs will retain jobs

KOLKATA

The seven Assistant Electoral Registration Officers (AEROs) suspended by the Election Commission of India (ECI) in West Bengal will not lose their jobs, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said on Tuesday. They will be assigned alternative duties by the state government but will not handle any election-related work, she added, expressing confidence in their performance in new roles.

Banerjee criticised the ECI for acting unilaterally, saying the officers were not given a chance to present their side. "The Commission is constantly threatening electoral officers and interfering with the jurisdiction of the state government. I request the Commission to operate more democratically," she said.

However, officials from the office of the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO), West Bengal, stated that the suspensions were based on genuine violations of ECI guidelines during the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise. Observers had cautioned the seven AEROs, but they allegedly continued operating outside the prescribed procedures, prompting their suspension.

The Chief Minister also accused the ECI of deleting names of genuine voters using Artificial Intelligence (AI), indirectly pointing to ECI's Director General of IT, Seema Khanna. She said the Commission is not following Supreme Court directives and treating West Bengal differently by not accepting identity documents considered valid in other states.

The issue highlights ongoing tensions between the state government and the ECI amid preparations for voter list revisions. Banerjee reiterated that while the suspended AEROs will be reassigned, the state will continue to monitor electoral processes closely, ensuring compliance with democratic norms while protecting the rights of voters and officials involved in the revision exercise.

Kerala High Court quashes Nava Kerala survey

KOCHI

The Kerala High Court on Tuesday stayed the Nava Kerala Survey, making strong observations against the CPI(M) and the state government.

The Division Bench criticised State Secretary M.V. Govindan, suggesting the party may have had prior knowledge of the survey and questioning how it learned about the government decision in advance.

The court noted that before the survey was officially approved, Govindan had sent a letter to party cadres asking them to register on the survey portal. His response to this allegation was described as evasive, strengthening the petitioners' claims.

The High Court also quashed the survey over violations of the Rules of Business in sanctioning Rs 20 crore for a "special PR campaign," calling the fund allocation a breach of procedure. The manner in which the survey was conducted also raised doubts.

The survey, announced by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan to gather public feedback on development and welfare initiatives, was scheduled to run until February 22. Petitioners, including KSU State President Aloysius Xavier and Congress Ernakulam District Panchayat member Mubas Onakkali, argued that public funds were being misused to collect voter data for CPI(M) ahead of elections.

The court emphasised that prior approval from the Finance Department was mandatory for such government-funded surveys, which had not been obtained.

Govindan was made a respondent in the case, and the Bench described the affidavit submitted by him as unsatisfactory, terming the matter a deviation from financial norms.

The decision is seen as a significant setback for the state government with Assembly elections approaching.

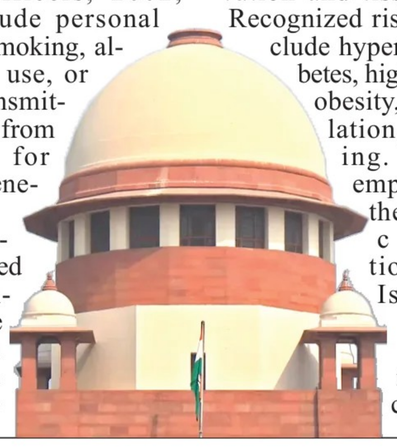
ARMY PENSION

SC denies Army pension for smoking

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court of India has ruled that smoking-related illnesses are not valid grounds for disability compensation in the Army.

The decision came after a former Army personnel filed a claim, linking his ischemic stroke to military service. A bench of Justices Aravind Kumar and Prasanna B. Varale upheld the Armed Forces Tribunal's order, noting that the appellant smoked around ten bidis daily. The Court referred to Regulation 173 of the Pension Regulations for the Army, 1961, and the Guide to Medical Officers, 2002, which exclude personal habits like smoking, alcohol, drug use, or sexually transmitted diseases from qualifying for disability benefits.



The judgment explained that an ischemic stroke occurs when a blood clot or plaque blocks blood flow to the brain, causing oxygen deprivation and tissue damage. Recognized risk factors include hypertension, diabetes, high cholesterol, obesity, atrial fibrillation, and smoking. The Court emphasized that the appellant's condition—"Stroke Ischemic RT MCA Territory"—was neither caused nor worsened by military service.

The bench also clarified that a previous ruling in Bijender Singh v. Union of India & Ors. (2025) was not relevant. In that case, extreme conditions like high-altitude deployment at Siachen Glacier were considered, whereas the current case had no such exceptional circumstances.

The Court's ruling reinforces that disability pensions in the Army are limited to conditions arising from service or aggravated by it, and personal habits remain the individual's responsibility.

Jharkhand budget session begins with all-party co-op

RANCHI

An all-party meeting was held in Ranchi ahead of the Jharkhand Assembly's Budget Session, beginning Wednesday. Speaker Rabindranath Mahato urged members across party lines to cooperate, stressing that constructive and factual debates are essential for finding solutions to public issues. He hoped the government would provide comprehensive replies to members' questions and directed all departments to complete preparations in advance to avoid disruptions.

Mahato instructed officials to provide accurate responses, honour previous assurances, and keep the Assembly Secretariat informed. Earlier, he met senior government officials to review arrangements and ensure the presence of senior officers during proceedings, allowing ministers to access prompt and updated information while responding to queries.

Chief Minister Hemant Soren said the government is fully prepared and welcomed the suggestions given during the meeting, promising a smooth session with collective discussions on state issues. Finance and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Radha Krishna Kishore emphasised better interdepartmental coordination and called for organised presentation of proposals and plans.

Leader of the Opposition Babulal Marandi, Congress Legislature Party leader Pradeep Yadav, RJD leader Suresh Paswan, and AJSU MLA Nirmal Mahto were present. Key topics discussed included security arrangements, administrative coordination, document preparation, and departmental accountability to ensure orderly conduct of the Budget Session.

QUICK READ

TTP suicide attack kills 12 in Bajaur

PESHAWAR

A suicide attack by Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan militants targeted a joint security checkpost in Bajaur, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, killing 12 terrorists and a young girl. The blast damaged parts of the checkpost and nearby houses, injuring seven civilians, including women and children. Security forces responded quickly, engaging fleeing attackers and rescuing trapped residents. The TTP claimed responsibility. Chief Minister Sohail Afridi condemned the attack, urged speedy relief efforts, and vowed continued operations against militants to ensure regional safety.

ICE arrests Indian man for child assault

NEW DELHI

The United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) has arrested an Indian man, Vodela Yashaswi Kottapalli, for allegedly sexually assaulting a child under 13 in New Jersey. He is an undocumented immigrant and will stay in custody during removal proceedings. Authorities say he also faces theft, shoplifting, and public disorder charges. ICE called him a "criminal illegal alien." The case has sparked social media outrage, with people demanding strict punishment and better protection for children.

Spain probes X, Meta, TikTok over 'abuse'

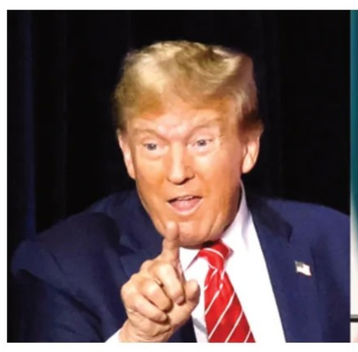
MADRID

Spain has ordered prosecutors to investigate X, Meta, and TikTok for sharing AI-generated child sexual abuse content, Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez said. He warned that such platforms harm children's mental health, dignity, and rights. The government said it will not let tech companies act with "impunity." The move is part of wider efforts to fight online abuse and protect minors. Sánchez recently suggested banning social media for users under 16. The investigation aims to make digital platforms more accountable.

Khamenei warns Trump as indirect nuke talks begin

Iranian Supreme Leader Khamenei warned President Trump of severe consequences as nuclear talks resumed in Geneva

TEHRAN



Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei issued a strong warning to US President Donald Trump as indirect nuclear talks between the two nations resumed in Geneva.

Khamenei emphasized that even the world's strongest military could face serious setbacks, criticizing Trump's frequent boasts of military power. He highlighted the vulnerability of US warships and warned that Tehran would not allow threats to influence its policies.

The Geneva talks involve senior US representatives, including envoy Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, who are meeting Iranian officials to discuss the long-standing nuclear dispute. Khamenei's remarks came alongside the arrival of Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and his delegation, underlining the country's firm stance in the negotiations.

President Trump, meanwhile, reiterated that he would engage "indirectly" and warned of consequences if a deal is not reached. He referenced recent US strikes on Iranian nuclear sites in Fordow, Natanz, and Isfahan, claiming the operations prevented Tehran from obtaining nuclear weapons. Trump stated that economic and political pressures have pushed Iran back to the negotiating table, expressing hope for a deal while acknowledging potential regional tensions.

The renewed talks follow the collapse of earlier negotiations held in Muscat and Rome in April 2025. Both sides have emphasized their positions: Tehran insists it will not tolerate threats, while Washington maintains a strong military presence in the Middle East to reinforce its warnings.

Observers say these indirect discussions are crucial for easing tensions in the region, as both nations navigate decades of mistrust.

The world is watching closely, hoping diplomacy can prevent further escalation and ensure stability in a historically volatile region.

India-Japan deepen co-op across multiple sectors

India and Japan reaffirm strong ties, expanding collaboration in trade, defence, technology, and regional security to promote peace, stability, and prosperity across the Indo-Pacific region.

TOKYO

India and Japan have reaffirmed their growing partnership, highlighting increased cooperation across political, economic, and strategic sectors. India's Ambassador-designate to Japan, Nagma Mallick, met Japanese Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications Hayashi Yoshimasa, emphasizing steady progress in bilateral ties. Both sides reviewed ongoing collaboration in areas such as trade, technology, infrastructure, and security.

The engagement follows high-level exchanges, including External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's meetings with leaders from Japan, Germany, and Brazil during the Munich Security Conference 2026. The discussions focused on strengthening multilateral cooperation and advancing shared global goals.

Earlier this month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi on her electoral win, expressing confidence that the India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership would reach new heights under her leadership. The two leaders had met previously at the G20 Summit in Johannesburg, where they discussed innovation, defence, trade, and talent mobility, reaffirming the importance of their partnership for regional peace and stability.

India and Japan continue to expand cooperation in critical areas, reflecting a shared vision for a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific region. Both nations are committed to promoting economic growth, security, and prosperity through joint initiatives in technology, defence collaboration, infrastructure development, and talent exchange programs. Experts note that sustained engagement strengthens regional stability and reinforces strategic ties between the two Asian democracies.

This deepening cooperation signals a long-term commitment to building strong, resilient partnerships that benefit both countries and the broader Indo-Pacific, reinforcing their role as key players in promoting global stability and sustainable development.

Philippines rebukes China over 'coercive' job warning

MANILA

The Philippines has sharply criticised the Chinese embassy for warning that worsening bilateral ties could cost millions of Filipino jobs, calling the remarks coercive and inappropriate.

The Department of Foreign Affairs said it "strongly objected" to the embassy's statement, arguing that linking economic cooperation to political disagreements undermines constructive diplomacy. It urged Chinese officials to adopt a more responsible tone in public exchanges while reaffirming Manila's commitment to resolving disputes through dialogue.

The diplomatic row was triggered by Beijing's demand for action against Philippine Coast Guard Commodore Jay Tarriela after he displayed a caricature of Chinese President Xi Jinping during an academic forum. The Chinese embassy accused him of spreading "smears", prompting the Philippine Senate to pass a resolution defending the officer and condemning the embassy's intervention as improper. Some lawmakers even called for the expulsion of Chinese diplomats.

Born in the segregated South, Jackson advanced King's legacy, led Operation PUSH, and championed civil rights globally

US civil rights icon Jesse Jackson dies at 84

WASHINGTON

Veteran civil rights leader Reverend Jesse Jackson, a close associate of Martin Luther King Jr and two-time US presidential hopeful, died peacefully on Tuesday at the age of 84, his family announced.

Jackson devoted more than five decades to the struggle for racial equality, social justice and political empowerment of African Americans and other marginalised communities.

Describing him as a "servant leader", his family said his lifelong commitment to justice and human dignity helped inspire a global movement for freedom and equality.

Born in the segregated American South, Jackson rose to prominence during the 1960s civil rights movement as a protégé of King.

He was present in Memphis in 1968 when the civil rights icon was assassinated — an event he later said deeply traumatised him.

After King's death, Jackson carried forward his legacy by leading Operation PUSH in Chicago, which focused on improving economic and social opportunities for Black Americans.

In 1984 and 1988, he sought the Democratic Party's presidential nomination, making history with his "Rainbow Coalition" campaign that brought together minorities, workers, the poor and other underrepresented groups.

Despite being diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in 2017, Jackson remained active in public life, advocating progressive causes and urging equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines for Black communities.

Known for his powerful oratory and message of hope, Jackson's influence extended far beyond the United States, leaving a lasting imprint on the global civil rights movement.

New Mexico lawmakers launch probe into Epstein ranch

SANTA FE

New Mexico legislators approved a bipartisan truth commission to investigate alleged trafficking and abuse at Jeffrey Epstein's Zorro Ranch and gather survivor testimony.

In a unanimous vote, the New Mexico House of Representatives cleared legislation creating the state's first comprehensive inquiry into the sprawling Zorro Ranch property, about 55 km south of Santa Fe.

The four-member commission will have the authority to issue subpoenas, record testimonies from survivors and local residents, and compile findings for an initial report in July and a final submission by year-end.

The move follows the release of millions of previously undisclosed documents related to Epstein, the disgraced financier who died in a New York jail in 2019 while awaiting trial on federal sex-trafficking charges. Lawmakers said the alleged crimes linked to the ranch were never fully examined despite repeated complaints over the years.

Victim advocates maintain that girls and young women were trafficked to the 7,600-acre estate as early as the mid-1990s. Civil lawsuits have identified the property as a site of abuse, while earlier testimony to federal investigators described Epstein flying in "masseuses" and recruiting local therapists. Epstein, however, was never formally charged over offences tied to the ranch.

State Representative Melanie Stansbury said the commission would help build a complete account of events and identify individuals who may have enabled the crimes. Co-sponsor Andrea Romero added that earlier state-level efforts were halted at the request of federal prosecutors, leaving significant gaps in accountability.

The current owners of the property have pledged full cooperation. Officials say the inquiry aims not only to pursue justice for survivors but also to ensure stronger safeguards against future abuse.

Hamas rejects Netanyahu aide's 60-day ultimatum for group to disarm

GAZA CITY

Hamas dismissed Israel's 60-day disarmament demand, warning renewed war would destabilise region as fragile ceasefire negotiations and reconstruction plans continue.

Hamas has rejected an ultimatum issued by a senior Israeli official calling on the group to disarm within 60 days or face a resumption of military operations in Gaza. Senior Hamas leader Mahmoud Mardawi said the movement had no knowledge of any such proposal and described Israeli statements as "media threats" not linked to ongoing negotiations.

The warning was delivered by Israeli Cabinet Secretary Yossi Fuchs at a conference in Jerusalem, where he said the timeline was tied to a United States-backed initiative and could begin around the February 19 meeting of President Donald Trump's Board of Peace, which is expected to discuss Gaza's reconstruction. Fuchs indicated that if the plan failed, the Israeli military would "complete the mission".

Hamas reiterated that it would not surrender its weapons while Gaza remains under Israeli occupation, cautioning that any return to war would have serious regional consequences. The group has consistently argued that disarming an occupied population would leave Palestinians defenceless.

The development comes during the second phase of a US-mediated ceasefire that began in mid-January and includes proposals for Hamas's disarmament and the possible deployment of an international peacekeeping force. Hamas leaders, including Khaled Meshaal, have previously rejected such demands.

SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

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8			5			3		

2	3	5	8	1	9	4	6	7
7	4	6	5	2	3	9	1	8
1	9	8	4	7	6	5	3	2
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3	2	4	6	8	1	7	9	5
9	5	1	7	4	2	6	8	3
4	8	9	1	5	7	3	2	6
5	1	3	2	6	4	8	7	9
6	7	2	9	3	8	1	5	4

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

Fill a 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3×3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9.

UKRAINE PEACE DEAL

Land dispute dominates Russia-Ukraine peace talks

GENEVA

US-mediated talks between Russia and Ukraine began in Geneva, focusing on territorial control, security guarantees, and international pressure. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Kyiv faces stronger demands than Moscow to make concessions, highlighting the difficulty of achieving a breakthrough.

The talks come amid renewed Russian airstrikes that damaged Odesa's energy infrastructure, leaving tens of thousands without heat and water during winter. Zelenskyy called for tougher sanctions on Russia and increased military aid from allies to secure a "real and just" peace.

Territory remains the biggest obstacle. Russia is pressing Ukraine to hand over the remaining Donetsk areas, which Kyiv has firmly rejected. Moscow currently controls about 20 percent of Ukraine, including Crimea and parts of the Donbas seized before and after the 2022 invasion.

The Russian team is led by Kremlin aide Vladimir Medinsky, while Ukraine is represented by National Security and Defence Council secretary Rustem Umerov.

US envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner are mediating after previous talks in Abu Dhabi failed. Disagreements also continue over control of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant and the possible presence of Western troops in postwar Ukraine. With the fourth anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion on February 24 approaching, expectations for a major agreement are low.

Despite the challenges, Kyiv maintains its aim for a sustainable and lasting peace, stressing the importance of international support and fair negotiations to end Europe's largest conflict since World War II.

Real Madrid return to Benfica with Mbappé fit for revenge bid

Spanish giants seek knockout response after shock group-stage defeat

MADRID

Real Madrid travel to Lisbon aiming to settle scores with Benfica in the Champions League knockout stage, buoyed by the return of Kylian Mbappé.

Three weeks ago, Benfica stunned Madrid 4-2 in the league phase under coach José Mourinho, a result that denied the Spanish side automatic qualification for the round of 16 and sent the Portuguese club through on goal difference. The rematch at the Estádio da Luz opens their two-legged knockout tie.

Madrid coach Álvaro Arbeloa insisted the focus is on progression, not revenge. "Benfica did not surprise me because I know José Mourinho's teams. It's a new match and we are ready," he said, praising his former mentor's leadership.

Mourinho, meanwhile, described Madrid as "a wounded king," warning that his side would need to be near perfect to advance. Benfica famously secured qualification thanks to a dramatic late header from goalkeeper Anatoliy Trubin in their previous meeting.

A major boost for Madrid is Mbappé's availability. The forward, who has scored 38 goals this season, missed the weekend league fixture due to a minor knee issue but has been declared fit. He netted twice in the earlier loss to Benfica and will again spearhead Madrid's attack.

Elsewhere in the knockout round, defending champions Paris Saint-Germain face Monaco, while Inter Milan take on Norwegian debutants Bodø/Glimt.

For Madrid, record 14-time European champions, the mission is clear: overcome Mourinho's Benfica and continue their pursuit of another continental crown.

Yamal misses penalty as Girona stun Barcelona 2-1

Late collapse denies Barca chance to reclaim La Liga summit

GIRONA

Lamine Yamal missed a first-half penalty as Barcelona slumped to a 2-1 defeat at Girona, missing the chance to overtake Real Madrid at the top of La Liga.

The loss — Barcelona's second in less than a week following their Copa del Rey thrashing by Atletico Madrid — leaves Hansi Flick's side second in the standings, two points behind Madrid.

Barcelona had an opportunity to seize control before halftime when Yamal stepped up from the spot, only to see his effort crash against the post. The visitors finally broke the deadlock 14 minutes into the second half as Pau Cubarsí powered home a header from Jules Kounde's cross, bringing up Barcelona's 100th goal in all competitions this season.

But Girona responded swiftly. Just three minutes later, Thomas Lemar equalised from close range after impressive wing play by Vladyslav Vanat. Barcelona goalkeeper Joan Garcia had already been called into action several times and was left exposed again as Girona grew in confidence.

With both sides pushing for a winner, Girona delivered the decisive blow in the 87th minute. Substitute Fran Beltrán drilled a low shot into the corner from just inside the area to spark wild celebrations among the home fans.

Joel Roca was sent off in stoppage time, but Barcelona failed to capitalise on their numerical advantage.

The victory ended Girona's three-game winless run and lifted them to 12th in a tightly packed mid-table, while Barcelona's title push suffered a significant setback in the intensifying Spanish league race.

Neuer's injury hurts Bayern, missing leadership during decisive season stretch

Manuel Neuer sidelined for weeks with calf injury

MUNICH

Bayern Munich goalkeeper and captain Manuel Neuer will be out of action for several weeks after sustaining a calf injury, the Bundesliga leaders confirmed.

The 39-year-old suffered a minor muscle tear in his left calf during Bayern's 3-0 victory over Werder Bremen. Neuer picked up the injury in the first half and was substituted at the break, with 22-year-old Jonas Urbig taking his place for the remainder of the match.

In a statement, Bayern said Neuer would be unavailable "for the time being," a timeline that is expected to sideline him for the upcoming "der Klassiker" clash against Borussia Dortmund on February 28. The marquee encounter could prove significant in the title race, with Bayern currently holding a six-point advantage over Dortmund at the top of the table with 12 rounds remaining. Neuer's absence is a setback for the Bavarian giants, given his experience and leadership at a crucial stage of the season. The veteran goalkeeper has been a mainstay for both club and country for over a decade and continues to play a pivotal role despite nearing 40.

The injury opens the door for Urbig to gain valuable first-team minutes in the coming weeks. The young shot-stopper is now expected to deputise as Bayern navigate domestic and European commitments.

While the club has not specified an exact return date, the phrase "several weeks" suggests Neuer will miss multiple fixtures, leaving Bayern to rely on their squad depth as they push to maintain their Bundesliga lead and pursue further silverware this season.

Morikawa triumphs at Pebble Beach; Bhatia ties for sixth

PEBBLE BEACH

Collin Morikawa ended a 28-month title drought with a composed final-round performance to win the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am, while Akshay Bhatia slipped to a tied sixth finish after leading heading.

Morikawa shot a five-under 67 in blustery conditions at Pebble Beach Golf Links to finish at 22-under 266, securing a one-shot victory over Sepp Straka and Min Woo Lee. The two-time major champion had gone 45 starts without a win since October 2023 but delivered under pressure in a dramatic final round that saw six players share the lead at various stages. The decisive moment came at the par-5 18th, where Morikawa struck a superb 4-iron from 235 yards, starting the ball over the ocean wall and riding the wind back toward the green. A calm two-putt sealed the title after a tense wait caused by a ruling involving Jacob Bridgeman on the closing hole.

Bhatia, who began the day with a two-shot cushion, carded a closing 72 to finish three shots behind the winner. The 54-hole leader struggled to build momentum, managing only two birdies over his final 29 holes as swirling winds reshaped the leaderboard. Fellow Indian-American Sahith Theegala finished tied 60th after a 71.

World No. 1 Scottie Scheffler mounted a stunning charge with a 63 that featured three eagles, briefly tying for the lead before settling for a tie for fourth alongside Tommy Fleetwood.

Ezzejjari's brace powers East Bengal past NorthEast United

KOLKATA

Youssef Ezzejjari struck twice in six minutes before Miguel Ferreira added a stoppage-time goal as East Bengal FC cruised to a 3-0 victory over NorthEast United FC in the Indian Super League at the Vivekananda Yuba Bharati Krirangan.

Despite dominating possession in the first half, the Red & Gold Brigade struggled to carve out clear chances against a disciplined NorthEast defence guarded by Gurmeet in goal. The Highlanders, meanwhile, sought to exploit space behind the hosts' high defensive line, with Jithin and Parthib attempting to use their pace on the counter, though the final delivery often went astray.

East Bengal finished the opening half strongly but were unable to break the deadlock before the interval.

Six-minute second-half burst seals commanding home victory for hosts

NorthEast began the second period brightly, again threatening through Jithin's runs, yet without tangible reward. At the other end, Miguel Ferreira tested Gurmeet after connecting with a well-timed cross from Bipin Singh.

The breakthrough arrived in the 65th minute. Jeakson Singh initiated the move, releasing Bipin on the flank, and the winger delivered a precise cross into the box. Ezzejjari timed his run perfectly, losing his marker to head home his maiden league goal. The Spaniard doubled the advantage within five minutes, capitalising after Edmund Lalrindika's lobbed pass deflected kindly into his path, leaving him with a simple finish.

NorthEast nearly pulled one back in the 84th minute when Thoi Singh's cross rattled the crossbar after goalkeeper Prabhsukhan Gill misjudged his leap.

Ferreira then capped the performance in injury time, latching onto Jay Gupta's through ball and firing a clinical left-footed strike into the bottom corner to seal an emphatic win for the hosts.

Smriti Mandhana named BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year 2025

NEW DELHI

Smriti Mandhana was on Tuesday named the BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year for 2025, capping a stellar season in which she played a central role in India's Women's World Cup triumph.

Mandhana edged out a strong field that included India captain Harmanpreet Kaur, chess prodigy Divya Deshmukh, hurdler Jyothi Yarraji and shooter Suruchi Singh to claim the prestigious honour.

The elegant left-handed batter was instrumental in India's victorious Women's World Cup 2025 campaign, delivering crucial performances at the top of the order. She also enjoyed success in franchise cricket, lifting the Women's Premier League trophy for the second time, underlining her consistency across formats. Currently touring Australia for a bilateral series, Mandhana was unable to attend the ceremony. Her mother, Smita Mandhana, accepted the award on her behalf.

In a message shared during the ceremony, Mandhana said, "Thank you, BBC, for giving me the award for Best Sportswoman of the Year. 2025 was a special year for women's cricket, especially towards the end when we had the World Cup. I'm happy I could contribute and help India win matches."

The winner was selected by a distinguished jury comprising tennis legend Leander Paes, Paralympic medallist Deepa Malik and long jump icon Anju Bobby George.

Mandhana's latest accolade further cements her status as one of the leading figures in Indian women's sport, inspiring a new generation of cricketers with her achievements on the global stage.

Atiqa Mir scales WSK heights as lone female on grid

NEW DELHI

Atiqa Mir continues to turn heads on the international karting circuit, showcasing rare composure and speed after stepping up to the demanding OKNJ Junior category in the 2026 season.

The 11-year-old prodigy, the only female on a fiercely competitive WSK Super Master Series grid, made a voluntary leap from the Mini class to Junior — a significant jump in both machinery and competition. Undeterred by sub-zero European conditions and unfamiliar tracks, Atiqa announced her arrival with a stunning P2 finish in qualifying at the season opener.

She followed it up with another standout performance at the iconic Circuito Internazionale Napoli, clocking the sixth-fastest time in tricky wet conditions. During the race, she carved her way through a 45-plus kart field, gaining as many as 16 positions in a remarkable charge. The shift from Mini (ages 8–12) to Junior (12–14) represents a massive technical challenge.

Meyers Taylor claims historic monobob gold at Milan Cortina

CORTINA D'AMPEZZO

Elana Meyers Taylor finally captured the one prize that had eluded her glittering career, winning the women's monobob title at the 2026 Winter Olympics to become the oldest American woman to claim gold at a Winter Games.

The 41-year-old clocked a combined time of 3 minutes, 57.93 seconds over four heats, sealing victory with a stirring final run. When the result became official, Meyers Taylor dropped to her knees in tears before wrapping herself in the American flag.

Germany's Laura Nolte, who led by 0.15 seconds entering the last heat, settled for silver after failing to hold her advantage. Fellow American Kaillie Humphries claimed bronze in 3:58.05, securing her fifth Olympic medal.

Meyers Taylor had already amassed five Olympic medals — three silver and two bronze — across previous Games, along with multiple World Cup and world championship titles. She was also the most decorated Black athlete in Winter Olympic history even before this breakthrough. Now, with six career medals, she equals Bonnie Blair for the most Winter Olympic medals by a U.S. woman.

Sliding in reverse order among the top three, Humphries posted her time first to lock in at least bronze. Meyers Taylor followed with a near-flawless descent that guaranteed no worse than silver and ultimately proved unbeatable when Nolte's final run fell short.

Brentford survive scare against Macclesfield in FA Cup

LONDON

Brentford narrowly avoided a major upset in the FA Cup, edging sixth-tier Macclesfield 1-0 thanks to a late own goal.

The Premier League side, currently seventh in the top flight, were heavy favourites against opponents sitting 116 places below them in the English football pyramid. However, they were made to work hard at Moss Rose, where Macclesfield once again demonstrated the resilience that had seen them knock out holders Crystal Palace in the previous round.

Brentford manager rotated his squad heavily, making seven changes, but still fielded a side expected to progress comfortably. Instead, the hosts matched them for intensity and organisation, frustrating the visitors for much of the contest. The decisive moment arrived 20 minutes from time. Aaron Hickey delivered a teasing cross into the box, and under pressure, Macclesfield defender and PE teacher Sam Heathcote inadvertently headed the ball into his own net, breaking the deadlock in cruel fashion.

Macclesfield, managed by John Rooney — brother of former England captain Wayne Rooney — refused to fold. They pushed forward in the closing stages in search of an equaliser that would have forced extra time, but Brentford's defence held firm to preserve their slender advantage. Despite the narrow margin, Brentford's progression ensures their place in the last 16, where they will face West Ham United.

For Macclesfield, the defeat marked the end of a spirited cup run that captured the imagination, while Brentford will be relieved to have sidestepped one of the competition's potential giant-killing stories.

Adani unveils $100B plan for green-powered AI infra

The road map expands on AdaniConnex's existing 2 GW national data centre footprint, targeting 5 GW of capacity

NEW DELHI

Gautam Adani announces massive green data centre investment to boost India's AI leadership ambitions.

Billionaire industrialist Gautam Adani has revealed a bold plan to invest $100 billion by 2035 to build green, AI-ready data centres across India. The project, led by the Adani Group, aims to create what it calls India's sovereign AI backbone and strengthen the country's role in the fast-growing global artificial intelligence sector.

The group said the direct investment could attract another $150 billion in related sectors over the next decade, including server manufacturing and digital infrastructure. Together, this could help build a $250 billion AI ecosystem in India.

In a regulatory filing, flagship company Adani Enterprises Ltd. said its shares rose up to 2.4 per cent in early trade on Tuesday after the announcement, reflecting positive investor response.

Adani said the world is going through an Intelligence Revolution that is more powerful than past industrial changes.

He added that countries able to combine energy strength with computing power will shape the future, and India is in a strong position to lead.

The roadmap expands on AdaniConnex's existing 2 GW data centre network, which will be scaled up to 5 GW.

The group plans to work with Google to build a large AI data centre campus in Visakhapatnam. It has also partnered with Microsoft to set up campuses in Noida, Hyderabad and Pune.

Experts say the move could boost India's digital strength and speed up AI innovation.

A $250-billion AI infra vision

The initiative aims to create a long-term sovereign energy and compute platform to position India as a global leader in 'Intelligence Revolution'. The Group estimates the investment will catalyse an additional $150 billion to create a projected $250 billion AI ecosystem over the next decade.

Building world's largest integrated data centre platform

The road map expands on AdaniConnex's existing 2 GW national data centre footprint, targeting 5 GW of capacity. The platform will integrate renewable power generation, transmission networks and hyperscale AI compute in a unified architecture

'Global South must build its own multilingual AI models'

NEW DELHI

Former Amitabh Kant on Tuesday urged India and other Global South nations to develop their own artificial intelligence (AI) models using local data to ensure inclusive growth and equitable benefits.

Speaking at the India AI Impact Summit 2026 during the session "AI for India's Next Billion," Kant emphasised that AI systems must be multilingual, accessible, affordable, and accountable. He warned that rapid AI advancements and massive global investments could widen socio-economic gaps if not responsibly implemented.

Kant stressed that AI should reach those below the poverty line and improve education, healthcare, and nutrition. He noted that systems not designed for underprivileged populations risk deepening existing inequalities. Highlighting linguistic diversity, he said AI tools that are not multilingual could exclude large sections of society.

He pointed out that India and other Global South countries contribute significantly to the data powering large language models, with India providing 33 per cent more data than the United States. Kant cautioned that global tech firms could monetise this data for expensive products, sidelining the very nations that supplied it.

Drawing lessons from India's digital public infrastructure success, he suggested a layered AI model: a strong digital identity framework at the base, with private players building competitive solutions on top

India to add 20,000 GPUs in a week: Union Min

NEW DELHI

Government plans major expansion of AI computing power and outlines next phase of strategy.

Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Tuesday said India will add 20,000 more GPUs within a week, raising total capacity beyond 38,000 already available under the IndiaAI Mission. The move aims to strengthen the country's artificial intelligence computing infrastructure.

A GPU is a powerful chip that helps run AI programs and process complex tasks faster. Vaishnaw said over 38,000 high-end GPUs are currently available at about Rs 65 per hour, nearly one-third of global average costs.

He added that the next phase of India's AI journey will focus on design and research, building solutions suited to Indian needs. AI-related investments at the India AI Impact Summit are expected to cross USD 200 billion, including USD 90 billion already committed.

The minister said India is in talks with major firms for more AI investments. He also highlighted AI awareness programs in schools across rural and urban areas, using regional languages and cultural context.

On regulation, he noted that India is working with around 30 countries on AI policy and supports a techno-legal approach. Global platforms such as Netflix and Meta must follow India's constitutional framework, he said.

Vaishnaw called for stronger rules against deepfakes, especially to protect children, and stressed fair copyright payments for content creators. He said India continues to share its digital public infrastructure globally without seeking royalties.

QUICK READ

Indian auto industry set for moderate growth

NEW DELHI

The ICRA has said that India's auto industry will see moderate growth of 3–6 per cent in 2026-27. This comes after strong growth in late 2025-26 due to GST-related benefits and good rural demand. Passenger vehicle sales may rise 4–6 per cent, while two-wheeler sales could grow 3–5 per cent. Commercial vehicle volumes are also expected to increase 4–6 per cent, helped by economic activity and steady demand for buses.

India shifts focus to hybrid power projects

NEW DELHI

Nuvama Research has said that India's power sector is now moving towards hybrid and storage-based projects. This shift aims to improve power reliability and better use renewable energy. The report noted that solar power supply is currently enough, with solar-hour prices at Rs 4.3 per kWh in January 2026. During the day, supply was higher than demand, leading to almost no power shortage and stable electricity availability.

RBI may keep interest rates unchanged

NEW DELHI

The Reserve Bank of India is likely to keep interest rates unchanged in FY27, according to a report released on Tuesday. The bank's Monetary Policy Committee is expected to hold rates steady as consumer price index inflation may rise slightly in the coming year. The move aims to control inflation while supporting economic stability. The report suggests that policymakers will closely watch price trends before taking any major decision.

India-Ireland forge digital future

NEW DELHI

Jyotiraditya Scindia on Tuesday held a high-level meeting with Jack Chambers to strengthen digital ties between India and Ireland.

The talks focused on expanding cooperation between the two countries, both seen as innovation-driven democracies. The meeting highlighted India's fast digital growth and explored new ways to work together in the digital economy.

Scindia briefed the Irish delegation on India's Digital Public Infrastructure, including the Unified Payments Interface and the Direct Benefit Transfer system. He said these platforms have changed how services and payments are delivered across the country. He also spoke about India's rapid 5G rollout and efforts to expand rural broadband to bridge the digital divide. According to him, these developments form the base of a future-ready partnership between the two nations.

Ministers discuss digital public systems, 5G growth, AI cooperation and global telecom leadership, aiming to build a strong, future-ready partnership between two innovation-driven democracies.

The ministers discussed cooperation in emerging technologies such as quantum communications, artificial intelligence and regulatory innovation. Both sides expressed interest in working together in advanced digital fields.

The meeting also covered global cooperation under the International Telecommunication Union.

India is seeking support for its bid to host the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in 2030. By requesting Ireland's backing, India hopes to strengthen its role in global telecom policy and promote inclusive digital growth.

Scindia later said both nations can build a strong and forward-looking digital partnership based on shared values and technological progress.

JSW MG Motor to launch 6 new NEVs in India

MUMBAI

JSW MG Motor India is set to expand aggressively in India's New Energy Vehicle (NEV) segment, planning six new model launches soon.

The company, already strong in the electric vehicle market with the MG Windsor EV, MG Comet EV, and MG ZS EV, aims to further strengthen its NEV portfolio. NEVs include Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs), Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicles (PHEVs), and Strong Hybrid Vehicles.

Anurag Mehrotra, Managing Director of JSW MG Motor India, confirmed most upcoming models will be NEVs. Among them is the Majestor SUV, recently showcased in Faridabad, and MG's first plug-in hybrid SUV for India, codenamed

'520'. This new model will sit on a multi-energy platform and compete with models like the Mahindra XEV 9S and XUV7XO.

The PHEV may be based on the Wuling Starlight 560 SUV, sold internationally as Xingguang in China and Wuling Eksion in Indonesia. Globally, the SUV comes in 5- and 7-seater layouts, combining SUV styling with MPV practicality. The plug-in hybrid variant features a 20.5 kWh battery paired with a 1.5-litre petrol engine, providing around 100 km of electric-only range. The pure electric variant uses a 56.7 kWh battery, offering up to 500 km on a single charge.

MG Motor plans to price the upcoming EVs and PHEVs competitively. The plug-in hybrid SUV is expected to face limited competition initially and could serve as a practical bridge for buyers transitioning from conventional internal combustion vehicles to fully electric cars in India.

'Agri residues can yield 18000 MW power in India'

NEW DELHI

India aims to generate over 18,000 MW of power annually from its 350 million tonnes of agricultural residues, turning waste into a valuable resource, according to an official statement on Tuesday.

The government is promoting circular agriculture, where crop residues are used not only for energy but also to produce nutrient-rich organic fertilisers, reducing dependence on chemicals and improving soil health. Under the Crop Residue Management Initiatives, Rs 3,926 crore has been provided between 2018–19 and 2025–26. Over 42,000 Custom Hiring Centres and 3.24 lakh machines have been deployed to support sustainable residue management.

Flagship schemes like GOBARdhan have helped establish 979 biogas plants across 51.4% of districts as of January 14, 2026. These plants convert dung, crop residues, and food waste into clean energy and organic manure.

Globally, 1.3 billion tonnes of food are wasted yearly, and nearly one-third of municipal solid waste is biodegradable. Poor waste management releases methane, pollutes air and water, and accelerates climate change, making sustainable solutions both environmentally and economically critical.

The statement emphasised adopting a "waste-to-wealth" approach, recovering, reusing, and reintegrating value from residues. Scaling proven interventions, strengthening local institutions, and aligning economic incentives with ecological outcomes can make circular agriculture a key driver of food security, climate resilience, and inclusive rural development. By converting agricultural waste into energy and fertiliser, India seeks to enhance sustainability while boosting rural prosperity.

India's exports surge, eyes $860 billion milestone

NEW DELHI

India's export sector showed strong growth in January, with combined merchandise and services shipments rising 13.16 per cent year-on-year to $80.45 billion, up from $71.09 billion in January 2025, according to Ministry of Commerce and Industry data.

Merchandise exports alone increased 0.6 per cent to $36.56 billion despite global economic challenges. From April to January, cumulative exports of goods and services rose 6.15 per cent to $720.76 billion. Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal expressed confidence that India could reach $860 billion in total exports by the end of the financial year.

Imports in January jumped 19 per cent to $71.24 billion, driven mainly by higher gold and silver purchases. This widened the merchandise trade deficit to $34.68 billion, up from $23.43 billion a year earlier and $25 billion in December.

The January data also reflects easing US tariffs, which were reduced from 30 per cent to 18 per cent under the recent India–US Bilateral Trade Agreement. The pact provides tariff rationalisation, zero-duty access for key products, and safeguards for farmers, MSMEs, and domestic industries.

India's exports to the US totalled $86.35 billion in 2024, and the agreement is expected to boost competitiveness in textiles, leather, gems and jewellery, agriculture, machinery, pharmaceuticals, and technology sectors. Tariffs on $30.94 billion worth of goods were cut from 50 per cent to 18 per cent, while duties on $10.03 billion of exports were removed entirely.

Analysts say these changes will improve price advantages and market access for Indian products, strengthening the country's position in global trade.

PRICE DATA

India's wholesale inflation climbs to 1.81%

NEW DELHI

India's wholesale inflation stood at 1.81 per cent in January compared to the same month last year, according to data released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry on Monday.

The rise in wholesale prices was mainly driven by higher costs of basic metals, food products, textiles and other manufactured goods. On a monthly basis, the Wholesale Price Index increased by 0.51 per cent in January 2026 over December 2025.

The Food Index, which includes food articles and food products, eased slightly from 196.0 in December to 194.2

in January. However, on a yearly basis, food inflation under wholesale prices rose to 1.41 per cent.

Manufacturing, which makes up over 64 per cent of the WPI basket, recorded a 1.3 per cent increase during the month. Out of 22 manufacturing groups, 19 saw price gains, led by basic metals, food products, textiles and electrical equipment. Prices fell in pharmaceuticals, machinery and furniture compared to December.

Retail inflation, based on the Consumer Price Index with the revised 2024 base year, was earlier reported at 2.75 per cent in January by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. Food inflation under CPI stood at 2.13 per cent.

Among vegetables, prices of potatoes, onions and garlic declined, while tomato prices increased. Pulses such as arhar and tur also saw lower rates.

Housing inflation was recorded at 2.05 per cent.

Precious metal jewellery prices showed a sharp jump. Silver jewellery inflation surged to 159.67 per cent, while gold jewellery prices rose 46.77 per cent year-on-year.

Pakistan eye Super 8s spot in must-win clash against Namibia

NRR battle intensifies as Pakistan seek decisive victory in Colombo

COLOMBO

Former champions Pakistan face a do-or-die encounter against Namibia in their final Group A fixture of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup on Wednesday, with qualification for the Super 8s hanging in the balance.

While India have already sealed their berth following a commanding 61-run win over Pakistan earlier this week, the second qualification spot remains up for grabs. Both Pakistan and the United States are locked on four points, but the USA hold a significant advantage in net run rate (0.788) compared to Pakistan's negative -0.403. The equation is simple for Pakistan: win, and they stay alive. Any slip-up would leave them relying on other results and complex permutations.

Led by Salman Ali Agha, Pakistan's campaign has been jolted by their defeat to India, which exposed familiar frailties in their batting. The spotlight will once again be on Babar Azam and the top order after their collapse in the previous match. Reduced to 13 for three by India's pace attack, Pakistan never recovered, raising concerns about their approach in high-pressure games.

Shaheen Shah Afridi, too, will be eager to rediscover rhythm after an expensive spell against India. Early breakthroughs against Namibia could prove decisive in easing nerves within the Pakistani camp.

Despite being winless, Namibia have shown discipline and tactical sharpness. Captain Gerhard Erasmus impressed with a four-wicket haul against India and will relish testing Pakistan's vulnerable middle order. With JJ Smit's pace and Louren Steenkamp's steady starts at the top, Namibia have the tools to challenge. For Pakistan, the path is clear — deliver a clinical performance or risk an early exit.

Shoaib Akhtar calls Naqvi 'good man' after PCB outburst

COLOMBO

Former pacer clarifies remarks amid backlash after India defeat controversy

Former Pakistan speedster Shoaib Akhtar has softened his stance against Mohsin Naqvi, a day after lashing out at the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chief following Pakistan's 61-run defeat to India in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup. Akhtar had earlier described Naqvi as "incompetent and illiterate" after Sunday's loss in Colombo, remarks that quickly went viral and sparked widespread debate. However, the former pacer clarified that his comments were not personally directed at Naqvi.

"The words 'incompetent and jaahil' were not meant for Mohsin Naqvi bhai. My hint was towards the top brass running international cricket. The television channel twisted it," Akhtar said, adding that Naqvi is a "good guy" who wants to improve Pakistan cricket but may not always receive the right advice.

Akhtar maintained that his frustration stemmed from the reversal of a proposed boycott of the India match. "I am angry with him as he took a stand but did not stick with it. The entire community was with him," he explained.

The controversy erupted after Pakistan's heavy defeat extended India's dominance over their arch-rivals in T20 World Cup meetings. Akhtar had also criticised Babar Azam's batting position, questioned Shaheen Afridi's fitness, and raised concerns over Shadab Khan's selection and Pakistan's cricketing structure.

His apparent U-turn comes as Pakistan prepare for a must-win clash against Namibia to keep their Super 8 hopes alive. With scrutiny mounting over the team's performance and administration, Akhtar's remarks have added another layer of drama to an already turbulent campaign.

Former India batter calls rivalry exaggerated after Colombo mismatch

Manjrekar says India-Pakistan hype must end after one-sided clash

MUMBAI

Former India cricketer and commentator Sanjay Manjrekar has urged fans and broadcasters to tone down the hype surrounding India-Pakistan encounters, calling the rivalry "a mismatch" in the current cricketing landscape.

Reacting to India's dominant 61-run win over Pakistan in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup in Colombo, Manjrekar posted a video on Instagram captioned, "India-Pakistan hype needs to stop. India has moved on. Maybe the fans should, too."

In the video, Manjrekar said he finds it difficult to digest the excessive promotion of the fixture as the biggest draw in world cricket. "The hype of an India-Pakistan match, the way it is projected as this massive revenue generator for world cricket, is hard for me to accept," he remarked.

He argued that, purely from a cricketing perspective, the contest no longer carries the same competitive edge. "At this point, it is a mismatch. India has clearly moved ahead," he said, suggesting that fans should shift focus to more evenly matched rivalries.

India's comprehensive victory under Suryakumar Yadav reinforced that view. After posting 175/7, powered by Ishan Kishan's 77 and late contributions from the middle order, India bundled out Pakistan for 114 in 18 overs. The win marked India's third straight victory in Group A and secured their Super 8 berth.

The result also extended India's head-to-head dominance over Pakistan in T20 World Cup history to 8-1.

While the fixture continues to command massive global attention, Manjrekar's remarks have sparked fresh debate over whether the storied rivalry still lives up to its billing on the field.

HARDIK SINGH TO LEAD INDIA IN FIH PRO LEAGUE HOBART LEG

NEW DELHI

Midfielder Hardik Singh has been appointed captain of the Indian men's hockey team for the upcoming Hobart leg of the FIH Pro League, with regular skipper Harmanpreet Singh opting out due to personal reasons.

The matches, scheduled from February 20 to 25, will see India take on Spain and hosts Australia at the Tasmania Hockey Centre in Hobart.

India head into the Hobart leg looking to bounce back from a disappointing outing in Rourkela, where they suffered four consecutive defeats, including a heavy 0-8 loss to Argentina. Head coach Craig Fulton said the team had drawn valuable lessons from that phase and was focused on delivering improved performances.

Hardik, a two-time Olympic bronze medallist, will lead a squad blending experience and youth. Youngsters Amandeep Lakra and Manmeet Singh, who made their senior international debuts during the Rourkela leg, retain their places in the side.

A source close to Harmanpreet indicated the seasoned drag-flicker is expecting his second child with wife Amandeep Kaur and will miss the tour for family reasons.

Suraj Karkera and Mohith Honnenahalli Shashikumar will share goalkeeping duties, while the defence features experienced names such as Amit Rohidas, Jarmanpreet Singh and Jugraj Singh alongside emerging talents.

The midfield will revolve around Hardik, Vivek Sagar Prasad and Raj Kumar Pal, while the forward line includes Mandeep Singh, Abhishek and the returning Maninder Singh.

Fulton said the Hobart leg will also help fine-tune combinations ahead of the World Cup and Asian Games, as India aim to regain momentum on the international stage.

Jamie Knight returns to inspire Podar students in Bengaluru

BENGALURU

Students across Podar International Schools in the city received a special sporting treat as world-renowned freestyle footballer Jamie Knight returned to conduct exclusive workshops aimed at promoting creativity, focus and passion for sport.

Ranked among the world's top ten freestyle footballers and a multiple Guinness World Record holder, Knight is on his seventh visit to India. This time, he is engaging with students across two campuses of Podar International School in Bengaluru as part of the Podar Education Network's sports excellence initiative.

Globally celebrated for his extraordinary ball control and innovative tricks, Knight has collaborated with major international brands and performed on some of football's grandest stages. He featured as the official global mascot at UEFA Euro 2020 and showcased his skills during the UEFA Champions League Final in 2017 and 2018, earning admiration from legends of the game.

During the Bengaluru workshops, students were left spellbound by his gravity-defying tricks, seamless transitions and impeccable precision. Beyond the spectacle, Knight emphasised discipline, consistency and creative expression — qualities he believes freestyle football uniquely nurtures.

"It's always a joy to be back in India and to see how the students' confidence, skill and creativity have grown over the years. The enthusiasm at Podar International Schools is unmatched, and I'm constantly inspired by their energy and talent," Knight said.

Mr. Harsh Podar, Director of Podar Education Network, noted that such engagements extend learning beyond classrooms. "Jamie's workshops don't just teach football — they nurture discipline, focus and perseverance. These experiences encourage students to dream bigger," he said.

With a 98-year legacy, the Podar Education Network continues to integrate academics, sports and the arts, offering students global exposure and holistic development opportunities across its institutions in India.

Brook relieved as England reach Super 8 despite inconsistency

KOLKATA

Harry Brook admitted England have not produced their best cricket so far in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup but expressed satisfaction after sealing a Super 8 berth with a 24-run win over Italy at Eden Gardens.

England posted 203 after opting to bat and then defended the total comfortably, ensuring qualification for the next stage. Brook, however, acknowledged that the batting unit is yet to click collectively in the tournament.

"We haven't played our best cricket, but at the end of the day, we've made it through, and we're heading to Sri Lanka, so we can be happy about that," Brook said after the match. "It's been a trend so far. We haven't managed to string together the scores we'd like as a batting unit. But that's T20 cricket — it's a fickle game. One day you can smack a hundred, the next day you can get out first ball. We've just got to keep being brave."

The standout performer was Will Jacks, whose unbeaten 53 off 22 balls powered England past the 200-run mark. Jacks also chipped in with a wicket to claim the Player of the Match award.

Reflecting on his knock, Jacks said England had discussed maintaining intent on a high-scoring surface. "We understood it was a very good wicket. Batting first, you never know what's enough here, so that was the intent throughout," he noted, adding that he is settling into his role down the order.

England have now completed their group-stage fixtures, while Italy will face the West Indies in their final match on Thursday.

Though performances have fluctuated, England's progress keeps their title defence ambitions alive heading into the Super 8 stage.

Vinesh's comeback bid awaits TOPS clearance amid eligibility concerns

CHENNAI

Vinesh Phogat has set her sights on a competitive return, but her path back to elite wrestling remains uncertain as she is yet to receive clearance under the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS).

The multiple World Championships medallist, who announced her comeback in December after a brief retirement, has been training intensively following the birth of her child last year. Sources indicate she was targeting this year's Asian Games, but with just over six months remaining, time may not be on her side.

Her inclusion under TOPS was reportedly discussed during the latest Mission Olympic Cell meeting. However, members are understood to have debated her eligibility, citing the absence of a clear qualification pathway for the Asian Games. Additionally, the Wrestling Federation of India has laid down selection criteria, including mandatory participation at the national championships — a requirement she has not yet fulfilled.

Despite limited institutional backing, Vinesh continues to prepare quietly, with support from Olympic Gold Quest. Her former foreign coach Woller Akos had earlier expressed willingness to assist if approached. Currently a legislator in Haryana, she has been training in Bengaluru as part of her comeback roadmap.

Vinesh's last competitive memory remains the dramatic 2024 Paris Olympics, where she stunned reigning world champion Yui Susaki before being heartbreakingly disqualified for being 50 grams overweight on the day of her final bout.

A long-time TOPS beneficiary before Paris, her return to the scheme now hinges on meeting selection benchmarks. Whether she makes it back through a domestic tournament or another route, a successful return would mark one of Indian sport's most compelling comeback stories.

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